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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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F. R. LEAVIS

CONTENTS

Page

MR. ELIOT AND SOCIAL BIOLOGY, by *L. A. Cormican* 2

JAMES'S DEBT TO HAWTHORNE (III):
THE AMERICAN PROBLEM, by *Marius Bewley* 14

'THE WINDHOVER', by *F. N. Lees* 32

THE NOVEL AS DRAMATIC POEM (IV):
'ST. MAWR', by *F. R. Leavis* 38

CORRESPONDENCE: *Leon Edel* and *Marius Bewley* 53

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS 61

SIN AND SODA, *The Cocktail Party*, by T. S. Eliot, reviewed by John Peter (p. 61). *The American People*, by Henry Bamford Parkes, reviewed by Marius Bewley (p. 66). WYATT AND THE SCHOLARS, *The Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century*, reviewed by H. A. Mason (p. 72). *Palisades of Fear*, by Ronald Bottrall, reviewed by Peter Lienhardt (p. 81). *English Art, 1307-1461*, by Joan Evans, reviewed by Peter Ferriday (p. 83).

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MR. ELIOT AND SOCIAL BIOLOGY[1]

THE most gratifying thing about Eliot's *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* is that it could be written at all. First of all, it dispels some of its own gloom. Eliot implies in various places that the England of 1948 shows a deterioration from 1900; he indicates nowhere, as far as I can discover, any belief that England shows an improvement in the same time. Yet it is a striking improvement that a great and influential writer can proceed to his diagnosis of social ills quietly assuming that everyone knows the ills to be there. In the second place, it is bound to have good effects along two important lines of modern thinking: the semantic and the agnostic. It will, to some extent, halt the vicious, disintegrating tendency of semantics to turn all discussion of meaning into mere ingenious exercises with words. No one capable of understanding the book could remain quite comfortable in the conviction that all questions in theology, morals, sociology, are games with words. The book also shows that a man, highly cultured, deeply aware of the strains and difficulties in our society, capable of quite unusual achievement in art and criticism—such a man can hold a definite religion (or, at least, appear to himself to hold a definite religion). Eliot here represents the point in intellectual history at which the agnostic can no longer flatter himself that the intelligent people are all on his side. The general excellences are those we have come to expect in Eliot's work—the illuminating *aperçus* on topics we had imagined to be exhausted, the re-calling of old but forgotten truths or obscured principles, the calm readiness to follow wherever truth beckons, the constant stimulus to bring our own intellects into free and flexible play.

At the same time, no one who has profited by Eliot's literary criticism is likely to feel quite satisfied with his 'social biology'. To offer any disparaging criticism of Eliot is unpleasantly like quarrelling with one's father. To think at all on culture is for so many of us to be conscious of a large debt to him; if we are able to define our disagreement with him, it is largely because he has supplied us with the critical apparatus necessary to such definition. *Notes*, however, provokes much more than mere disagreement—it points to the conclusion that his work is very uneven in significance. As will be indicated later on, the book lends itself to various interpretations; I am concerned, however (as Eliot would put it) not so much 'with extracting a meaning', but with defining one reader's disappointment with what is undoubtedly a weighty achievement from one of the foremost minds of the day.

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[1]This, coming from Ottawa, continues the symposium opened by G. H. Bantock in Vol. XVI, No. 1.

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For example, an essay of this sort hardly needs all the safeguards Eliot gives it: we find too often the kind of phrase which occurs on p. 48: 'I must constantly remind the reader of the limitations of my subject'. The total effect of these safeguards is to give the essay an unpleasant resemblance to a purely political speech in which all objections and criticisms are forestalled and the speaker commits himself as little as possible. His opening statement of aim: 'to help to define a word, the word *culture*' (p. 13) is an example of playing too safe. Hardly anyone knows better than Eliot that a good book on culture will be good very largely because it is something to argue over; one can hardly argue over the desire of any man that a particular word be defined in a particular way. The book is too long if he aims merely at lexicography; his purpose is too narrow if he avoids all 'outline of social or political philosophy'. Culture can hardly be discussed in this isolated way, since social philosophy is an attempt to be truly wise about the well-being of society—the very aim of Eliot at least in Chapter II (The Class and the Elite), and Chapter V (Culture and Politics).

As a general weakness, one may note the absence—the annoying, frustrating absence—of the very quality which has made Eliot's literary criticism so stimulating, so influential—the constant recurrence to the concrete case. Without particular illustrations it is difficult either to clarify general ideas or to control one's 'impressions personnelles' in such a way that they may be 'érigées en lois'. In culture as in literature the sensitive intelligent handling of the particular case is more important than any general consideration by itself.

The essay supplies us with evidence that, in the field of social biology, his mind is not the finely adjusted, delicately probing instrument it is in his criticism. On page 89, for example, he presents as distinctly modern the view that 'culture is regarded either as a negligible by-product which can be left to itself or as a department of life to be organized in accordance with the particular scheme we favour'. If the evidence to the contrary were not so overwhelming, one would be inclined to think that Eliot had never heard of Sparta, Augustus or Richelieu: the effort to 'organize culture' is very ancient, very persistent, and obviously it can be organized only in accordance with the scheme someone favours. We are left groping in unnecessary darkness on page 90: 'the differences between the several European nations in the past were not wide enough to make their peoples see their cultures as different to the point of conflict and incompatibility'. 'In the past' is much too vague for a discussion such as this; besides, at *no* time were the *peoples* conscious enough of their culture to be aware of compatibility or incompatibility. Cromwell, the St. Bartholomew massacre, the Roman proscriptions are all reminders that 'liquidating enemies' is not an 'alarming development of modern war' (p. 59). We have, of course, become more efficient at liquidating large numbers at once, but that is quite another matter. These are all small points; but if Eliot were to read his essay with the same powers of observation he brings to

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his reading of, say, Arnold, he would, I am sure, find many more.

This general impression may be reinforced by examining the particular kind of detachment from the practical sphere which is found throughout. The disinterested love of truth for its own sake, detachment from practical convenience to oneself or to one's side or party, this is so rare and so noble a quality that we must salute it and be grateful for it when we find it, especially when it spurs to action so fine a mind as Eliot's. But if we tend to seek only that part of truth which suits us, there is the opposite danger that the pursuit of truth can be detached to the point of an unhealthy aloofness.

For example, he seems to show no consciousness of many important factors which are having a visible effect on culture to-day. He neglects the inevitable impact of material, especially of economic, forces on society. His discussion of Regionalism in Chapter III seems to leave blandly out of account the statement on p. 121: 'in the world of the future, it looks as if every part of the world would affect every other part'. Rapid transport and easy communication which make Europe, in a definable sense, smaller than Wales was two hundred years ago; the constant assimilation which is going on within the English-speaking world; the need for a mobile force of workers with which to maintain activity in our productive machinery: such factors shift the whole basis for regional differentiation. There are needed also public policies which can be made plausible to the voters. (To note such needs is not necessarily to admire them: a doctor may have to give a patient stimulants which he knows to be harmful, but without which, for the moment, the patient cannot survive at all.) Similarly, he shows no recognition of the great changes in the forms of wealth which are basically modifying the relations of classes to each other. To put the point unkindly for the moment, as far as Eliot is concerned, *Culture and Environment* might never have been written.

There is a further unhealthy detachment from facts in the way he expresses his dislike of the dirty, the charlatan side of politics.[2] The evils of politics will continue as they are until sensitive, subtle and flexible minds like Eliot's go into politics; and, however remote the latter possibility may be, perhaps a 'little yeast might leaven the whole mass'. One may cite the footnote, p. 15:

> 'It is only fair to add, that when it comes to talking nonsense about culture, there is nothing to choose between politicians of one stripe or another. Had the election of 1945 brought the alternative party into power, we should have heard much the same pronouncements in the same circumstances. The pursuit of politics is incompatible with a strict attention to exact meanings on all occasions. The reader should therefore abstain from deriding either Mr. Atlee or the late regretted Miss Wilkinson'.

[2]Eliot *should* be among the first to see that these evils are particular forms of original sin, and need 'the divine much more than the physician', and much more than the detached observer.

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I find this unpleasantly reminiscent of the schoolboyish antics of Shaw, to whom the 'smart' saying is sometimes more important than fine precision. Eliot's facts may be readily admitted. But the language is distressingly loose, the emphases fall on the wrong places, and the implications are misleading. 'Talking nonsense about culture' is very self-assured for a writer who gives his book so tentative a title much of what Eliot says in this essay might perhaps provoke the same facile comment in the minds of politicians who have to try to do something in the practical field. 'Politicians of one stripe or another', and 'alternative party' are a weak, patronizing way of saying: 'A plague o' both your houses'; they imply some sort of understanding nod to the reader, flattering his intellectual snobbery, and indicating: 'Of course, you and I are above the dirty business of politics'. And it is surprising that a man who believes that in a healthy society

> 'public affairs would be a responsibility not equally borne a greater responsibility would be inherited by those who inherited special advantages, and in whom self-interest, and interest for the sake of their families (a "stake in the country") would cohere with public spirit'. (p. 84)

affirms also that the pursuit of politics is 'incompatible with a strict attention to exact meanings on all occasions'. *Thoughts After Lambeth,* if nothing else, should remind Eliot that no 'pursuit', not even that of the Anglican episcopacy, is compatible with a strict attention to exact meanings on all occasions. And having been so patronizing to the politicians, it is not surprising that he turns to patronizing the reader, and tells him when not to laugh.

The ideas and the attitudes suggested in the footnote just mentioned are, certainly, details; they are however symptoms of the peculiar barrenness which belong to the observer who is under no obligation to make practical decisions. We cannot indeed demand that a man refrain from criticizing till he demonstrates his practical ability to do better; the validity of Eliot's criticism of *Hamlet* is not at all affected by the inferiority of Eliot to Shakespeare as a playwright. But one can demand that, when he writes on politics, he shows us a sensitive grasp of the practical realities and complex difficulties in which any political decision is made. The footnote seems to indicates the beginnings of a new monasticism—prompted as the ancient Thebaid was by a conviction that 'all flesh is corrupt', and the good must 'keep themselves unspotted from the world'. What is needed to-day, however, is the monasticism not of the Thebaid but of Monte Cassino—the Benedictine flight from the world which was not only compatible with, but imperatively demanded, every possible effort from the monks to help an ailing world. There is no reason for a man of Eliot's prestige and achievement to hesitate about offering some notes towards the definition of a plan of action. He could, at least, be less embarrassingly brief on the 'ideals and obligations of universities' (p. 123). The universities

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are not merely opportunities for acquiring the 'unconscious background of all our planning' (p. 94); they are focal points for resistance to any engulfing barbarism. With all reverence to Eliot's tact and taste, one could dispense with his history of *The Criterion* to make room for more precise suggestions on what the universities might reasonably hope to do, and also (since Eliot knows the publishing business from the inside) on what the publishers might be expected to do.

There is the same undesirable aloofness in the concluding remark of Chapter V (p. 94):

> 'Thus we slip into the assumption that culture can be planned. Culture can never be wholly conscious—there is always more to it than we are conscious of; and it cannot be planned because it is also the unconscious background of all our planning'.

What he says here is either a truism or misleading. Surely he is hardly denying the elementary principle that the deep unconscious which modifies conscious choice and action is itself largely modified by conscious choice. Even if he has forgotten his Aristotle: 'What end a man considers worth pursuing depends on the character he has (deliberately) built', he can not have forgotten his Shakespeare:

> Men's judgments
> Are a parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
> Do draw the inward quality after them,
> To suffer all alike'.

The unconscious is hardly any more important in relation to culture than to good literary criticism; in both, what is now unconscious is embedded in the mind because it was for some time deliberately examined and held. Unless he attaches to *planned* some sense which he does not mention, Eliot is simply negating all the efforts of educators from *The Republic* to *Scrutiny* when he says baldly: 'Culture cannot be planned'. If, as he implies in several places, our society is in a crisis, we might apply to it what Napoleon said of a battle: any plan is better than none. As far as Eliot dissociates himself (as he has a right to) from the planners, the planning is bound to fall into the wrong hands, and something like Nazism or Stalinism is much more likely to emerge than culture.[3]

It may be the same wrong aloofness that draws him to the idea of 'constantly dining with the Opposition'. Such dining may result, and has resulted, in the blurring of all important distinctions among the parties, and the consequent reduction of Parliament to a friendly club where sham battles are staged on occasion to edify the un-

[3]It is another illustration of the slackness of Eliot's mind in certain sections that the orderly description of culture on p. 120 is phrased throughout in such a way as to fit either Nazism or Stalinism; some parts fit either of these better than they fit what many believe to be the traditional culture of the West.

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initiated. Genial readiness to mix with one's political enemies is one of the finest traits of English political life; but it can issue in the detachment from all convictions. The 'trahison des clercs' may take the form of prostituting intellect to practical politics or to popular vulgarity; it may take the form (more attractive to the fastidious mind) of refusing, with splendid dignity, to commit oneself to anything practical. If our culture is deteriorating as much as Eliot implies, whose hand is better fitted than his to halt the process, if only by offering us suggestions to argue over? Definitions, even if they run to one hundred and twenty-four pages, are hardly likely to defend the things which Eliot holds really valuable.

He seems to expect (and even to count on) a similar aloofness in the people who will be 'cultured' in the future. There is, I believe, a nest of false assumptions in the remark on p. 120.

> ' The culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer; the culture of a poet will be somewhat different from that of a politician; but in a healthy society these are all parts of the same culture'.

As far as one can judge from the past, these clear-cut distinctions are undesirable; in any society which could call itself 'healthy', some poets would be politicians, the politicians who could would be poets; mine workers would be philosophers, and some philosophers would work in mines. There is no means of knowing whether Eliot would call the England of the first half of the Seventeenth Century 'healthy', but surely the blending of occupations and interests in Ben Jonson, in Bunyan, in Milton, indicates that, while brick-laying fighting, tinkering, politics are distinct things from poetry, the bricklayer, the tinker and the politician need not be distinct from the poet.

From the sociological point of view there are some further serious omissions and over-simplifications. It seems rather disingenuous to put so much reliance on the family to-day with nothing but the brief reference to *The Peckham Experiment* to indicate the problems and difficulties of the family. On the one hand he seems to take as a fact on which we can be easily agreed that we should (p. 104)

> 'do better to admit that we have arrived at a stage of civilization at which the family is irresponsible, or incompetent, or helpless; at which parents cannot be expected to train their children properly'.

Since he offers this seriously as better than 'congratulating ourselves when the school assumes another responsibility hitherto left[4] to the

[4]Many sociologists would object to the word *left*; a number of the responsibilities Eliot has in mind were *left* to the parents simply in the sense that no one else bothered about them; the handling of these responsibilities is a complex matter for which parents have seldom received the necessary training.

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parents', it would not seem that he is speaking ironically. Yet (p. 43):

> 'the primary and the most important channel of transmission of culture is the family. . . . When I speak of the family, I have in mind a bond which embraces a long period of time: a piety towards the dead, however obscure, and a solicitude for the unborn, however remote'.

He does not indicate how he expects the family to pass from what it is to what it should be; he does not indicate even one condition which is likely to bring the transition about; he offers nothing on the host of conditions which at present are working so powerfully against the family.

From a 'student of social biology' one would have expected some clarification of the distinction between *society* and the *state*. One of the most urgent (and one of the most difficult) problems in social biology is to allow the state all the power it needs to safeguard and foster all that may safely be entrusted to it, while not allowing it to absorb and control every form of communal or social activity. Except for the weakly-defined admiration for the family, and the fertile but undeveloped statement on the universities (p. 123), Eliot seems hardly to recognize the problem, much less to help us out of it. The question: What kind of institution is likely in the future to be strong enough to resist successfully the all-devouring state authority, this is the question to which Chapter V (*Culture and Politics*) suggests no answer. Eliot might, of course, plead that he is not pretending to account for all the necessary conditions for a flourishing culture. But, in the first place, this problem of state and society is really the concrete form of the general problem of individual and group or social culture; and besides, unless we find a means of making our modern Leviathan powerful enough without allowing it to subdue us all, the problems of Chapter V do not arise. The absence of such discussion has the effect of strengthening the general impression of remoteness which clings to so much of the essay; at practically no point does Eliot give the impression of a concrete situation firmly grasped by the writer and clearly presented to the reader. The few references he makes to actual situations are strangely timid and circumscribed.

The most serious omission is the lack of standards either stated or implied. Eliot is far too fine a critic not to know that social criticism, like literary criticism, implies the examination of the particular case in the light of the general consideration. As he puts it himself, for instance, in *The Use of Poetry* (p. 133), one cannot sensibly contemplate 'man's place in the perspective of time, unless one brings to its contemplation some belief that there is a sense and a meaning in the place of human history in the history of the world'. Yet in spite of keeping so aloof from the practical sphere, he suggests no general principle of discrimination among the various types of culture. This omission of judgments of value is all the more surprising in view of his previous remark:

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'if . . . you had no faith in the critic's ability to tell a good poem from a bad one, you would put little reliance upon the validity of his theories'. (*The Use of Poetry*, p. 17).

There is one point on which the Transatlantic reader particularly feels disappointment, and that is the lack of sympathetic reference to America. Eliot is, undoubtedly, entitled to his own opinion and his own conclusions; and there is no reason for turning an article such as the present into an *apologia* for the United States. But it is rather surprising that the two references to the United States (pp. 45, 92) fit so easily into a pattern of thinking which, superficial, misleading and rather mischievous, has become common in England in the last ten years. Eliot's few remarks can do no one any harm, and they can hardly be controverted. But the future of culture will depend to some extent on the degree in which England and the United States influence each other and pool their mental resources. Few Americans would deny that in such an exchange, England has more to offer than to receive. But if England is to be, as we may hope, the 'Athens of the future', there will be needed both a fuller recognition of the generosity (of mind and heart as well as purse) with which Americans handle their dealings with other peoples, and an appreciation of what is healthy and encouraging in the American spirit. If it is assumed as so many assume (I do not say Eliot himself) that the only developed instincts in the United States are the acquisitive and the sexual,[5] that American scholarship, outside the sciences, is matter for amused contempt, that we must get along with the Americans since they have so much economic power, if these and similar assumptions are uppermost in the minds of Englishmen, then the fruitful co-operation between the two countries becomes impossible—to the detriment of each. One cannot help wishing that Eliot had given, as his special training and position enabled him to give, some positive leadership towards a fuller, more articulated understanding between the intelligent people of both countries. It is not the universities of Europe alone (*cf.* p. 125) which should have their 'common ideals and obligations'; to put it in the way least flattering to American sentiment, the universities of the United States have much to learn from those of England, and the latter have some obligations in the matter.

The English Government (Conservative, Coalition, Socialist) has for many years been aware of the importance of cultivating friendly relations with America, and of helping Americans to understand British points of view. It is important then that the channels of cultured exchange should be cleared of obstructions as much as possible. It is only the Beaverbrooks on the one side, and the McCormicks on the other, who imagine that the relations between the two countries can be thought of as clever begging by the English and noisy imperialism on the part of the Americans. It is much to

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[5] To those who have never lived in the United States, Dos Passos' *USA* can be very misleading.

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be regretted that the few words Eliot has said could be turned so easily to their own purposes by both the Beaverbrooks and the McCormicks. It is still more to be regretted that, in an essay which insists so much and so rightly on the inter-communion of cultural societies, he should give no indication of how the major economic force in the world is to be integrated more organically into the culture of the West. For few people are better fitted for this than Eliot. The Appendix on *The Unity of European Culture* was an admirable opportunity to express in terms of culture what is a commonplace in terms of diplomacy, that the borders of the United States lie in Europe; and from the cultural point of view, this is only another way of saying that Europe stretches to the Pacific. What Europe becomes in the next fifty years will depend to some extent on what Europe has helped America to become.

The least satisfactory section is that on religion. The whole chapter, *Unity and Diversity*, leaves us with only the cloudiest notions of what 'faith', 'theology', and 'religion' mean to Eliot. The chapter does indeed contain a refreshingly factual account of the development of the Church of England (p. 79); but he takes even more precautions than Hollywood to ensure that no mention of religion be offensive to anyone, with the result that he commits himself to nothing and appears to be convinced of nothing in particular. He seems also to forget that religion, like culture, lies largely in the unconscious part of one's mind; only an external concept of religion, limited to rites and professed creeds, could lead him to say that 'all Anglican and Free Church lay men are exposed to the same environment of a culture severed from religion' (p. 79). Surely he is aware that the British constitution, property laws, Socialist ideas and ideals, the whole concept of what a government is and what it is for, all these things are what they are largely through the Christianity embedded in them. Even on Eliot's own showing the phrase, *a culture severed from religion*, is inaccurate since

> 'an individual European may not believe that the Christian Faith, is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning' (p. 122).

The vagueness of his terms becomes much more unsatisfactory when we come to such a pronouncement as: 'If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes' (p. 122). Eliot here seems to subscribe to a view which is just as much a matter of intellectual fashion to-day as the opposite was a hundred years ago. Eliot rightly deprecates the nineteenth-century view that religion does not matter; here, however, he attached more importance to religion than even Christopher Dawson. From the historical point of view it seems strange that a culture which produced a large number of its greatest works of art before the birth of Christ should become so dependent on Christianity that its vitality and fecundity must disappear if Christianity disappears.

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The assertion, 'If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes', is objectionable also on the grounds that Christianity here must mean any one of the 'various religious persuasions' of those who like to think of themselves as Christians. The sociologist would have no difficulty in proving that quite a number of these might disappear without culture being a whit worse off. Until Eliot tells us which Christianity he means, we can neither agree nor disagree.

From the theological point of view, the statement is also unacceptable. When he tells us that 'it is owing to two thousand years of Christianity'[6] that 'we trace our Christian heritage, the evolution of our arts, our conception of Roman law, our common standards of literature', he makes Christianity a vast cultural and religious bank deposit into which he throws everything he considers valuable. He claims both too much and too little for Christianity; too much, because it is here simply equated with all that is good in the Western world, or at least made the indispensable condition for all these good things. He also claims too little for Christianity; because, if it 'goes' or even can 'go', it might as well be recognized at once as a fake and a humbug. Whatever individual Christians may or may not believe, whatever non-Christians believe or do not believe Christianity to be, Christianity in any of its official definitions of itself up to the beginning of the eighteenth century unambiguously asserts its divine origin and divine power. Unless Eliot is juggling with words, the verb 'go' must mean the same thing in both clauses: 'If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes'; unless he is juggling with our minds, the second verb must mean 'disappear'. If Christianity disappears, it will have proved itself to be a colossal deception; if it possibly is such, we can surely contemplate its 'going' without any tremors. In the almost naïve readiness to throw out generalizations and the constant shying away from the definition of key terms, one can hardly recognize the mind which found in one sentence of Swinburne's two misleading assumptions and two misleading conclusions (*Selected Essays*, p. 118).

Another tangle of meanings is found in the standard suggested on page 67: 'A higher religion is one in which it is harder to believe'. This is worse even than the communist or agnostic idea that millions believe in Christianity because it is so easy to believe in. As a definition of a 'higher' religion, it is clearly false in the case of Christianity. To Eliot I presume, and certainly to millions of others (including the 'obscure dead' of almost two thousand years ago) Christianity is much easier to believe in than Zeus, Jupiter, Woden or the Great White Spirit, or any of the beliefs it replaced—and easier not only to people of a 'higher' civilization, but also to African Bushmen and Eskimos. 'Harder to believe' is, however, a phrase which opens so many avenues of thought, suggests so many types

[6]Here again there is unnecessary inaccuracy. It is only from about the sixth century that Christian institutions can be called, in any definable sense, vehicles for the transmission of culture.

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of religious experience and introduces so many subjective and variable factors, that one could give it almost any meaning one pleases.

It is also difficult to understand why anyone speaking from a 'Christian' point of view, should describe the conflict (pp. 67-8) as *eventually* between Church and State, since Christianity began, unmistakably and confessedly, with such a conflict. From Nero to Henry II and Hitler, the issue is essentially the same as that between Pilate and Christ: are there any fields of conscience in which the State has no jurisdiction at all?

On page 70 *Protestantism* appears as an historical fact; on page 71 as a type of mind or character. We can hardly make sense of the whole passage unless we interpret *Protestantism* as resistance to undue pressure from religious authorities. To call such resistance Protestantism is wanton vagueness and an invitation to loose thinking about the distinction between Protestantism and Catholicism.

Another undesirable simplification occurs in the statement on page 79 that 'the refinement or crudity of theological and philosophical thinking is itself, of course, one of the measures of the state of our culture'. One can only wish that before voicing such ideas Eliot had done what he sets out to do at the opening of the Appendix on European Unity: present his credentials. Both the general method and the particular judgments of *Thoughts After Lambeth* indicate that, in dealing with the refinement or the crudity of the logical thinking, Eliot's credentials are not quite in order. Unless it is fairly easy for the 'layman' to distinguish between refinement and crudity in such cases, it is hardly worth while to make the statement at all. Large numbers of men living in an atmosphere very different from Eliot's have found it easy to conclude, as Shaw does, that Athanasius is crude, Peter impertinent, Paul confused and John suffering from the effects of dope.

The rest of the sentence:

> 'the tendency in some quarters to reduce theology to such principles as a child can understand . . . is itself indicative of cultural debility'

is itself a gross reduction of complex issues to simple terms. Some of the great summaries of Christianity, *e.g.*, the Lord's Prayer, or Paul's 'He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law', are precisely statements of religious truth in such terms as a child or an illiterate slave can understand, while remaining statements too profound for any theologian to understand fully.

The most general objection to Eliot's concept of Christianity is that Eliot has so little faith in it; it has apparently brought about many wonderful results in the past, but it is not to be asked to do anything particular in the future. The rôle he ascribes to it in the past is much too big to be acceptable to the non-Christian, much too vague to please the Catholic.

What is most disquieting about the book is, I have tried to suggest, its symptomatic quality. The accumulative effect of the details

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I have mentioned is to pose a problem more serious than any explicitly discussed in the book. Coupled with the rest of Eliot's work (*e.g.*, with the inclusion in *Selected Essays* of the nugatory *Marie Lloyd*), the book compels us to wonder whether it has become impossible for intelligent people to absorb, much less circulate, the 'best that is known and thought'. Without such circulation, no organic structure (p. 15) is possible. With every allowance made, *Notes* is as unacceptable in sociology as Belloc's *Milton* in literary criticism. The latter is full of airy assumptions and false conclusions—largely because Belloc had no convictions, no formulable standards; his *Servile State,* on the other hand, is a work of penetrating insight, permanently valuable to anyone who thinks about society and politics. Of penetrating insight into literature, there is an abundance in Eliot: of formulable standards and convictions, there is hardly a trace in *Notes*. It is very unlikely that anyone will find in this essay either a clarification of ideals for the future, or a more exact way of defining one's dissatisfaction with institutions in the present. It was, I suggest, a mistake on Eliot's part to allow his mind, with its range, flexibility and penetration, to be de-routed into a task in which he finds it so difficult to deploy the full resourcefulness of the finest critical powers of the Twentieth Century.

L. A. CORMICAN.

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JAMES'S DEBT TO HAWTHORNE (III)

THE AMERICAN PROBLEM.

IT might be useful here to recall the two principal points that have already emerged from the foregoing pages. In discussing *The Blithedale Romance* and *The Bostonians* an attempt was made to show how Hawthorne provided James with an artistic precedent for dealing with American attitudes and material. If it is argued that the material was there for the taking, even without Hawthorne, we know that James chose to approach it through the way laid out for him by his compatriot. Later, in discussing *The Marble Faun* and *The Wings of the Dove,* we saw how both men were swayed by a moral bias in favour of America so considerable that their art could no longer perfectly discipline their partiality. The two James novels that have been dealt with here belong to the early and late periods of his career so that Hawthorne's influence is seen to be a constant factor. But the two Hawthorne novels that have been discussed are failures, and it would be a mistake to imagine that it was these that made the chief impression on James. In 1870 William James wrote to his brother that he had just been reading *The House of Seven Gables,* and he said: 'I little expected so *great* a work. It's like a great symphony with no touch alterable without injury to the harmony. It made a deep impression on me and I thank Heaven that Hawthorne was an American. It also tickled my national feeling not a little to note the resemblance of Hawthorne's style to yours and Howells's . . . That you and Howells with all the models in English literature to follow, should needs involuntarily have imitated (as it were) this American, seems to point to the existence of some real American quality'. To which Henry James replied: 'I'm glad you've been liking Hawthorne. But I mean to write as good a novel one of these days (perhaps) as *The House of Seven Gables'*.

William James's remark leads us away from the two late novels that have been discussed here to the two earlier masterpieces, *The Scarlet Letter* and *Seven Gables,* and it leads us into a difficulty. If one senses the greater effect of these novels on James's style—an effect proportionately greater as their genius is greater—one cannot discuss the indebtedness in those relatively tangible terms and propositions that were employed in discussing *Blithedale* and *The Marble Faun.* What one is most aware of is a kind of sympathy between the two men, a sympathy that brings them close together and harmonizes their voices. But 'sympathy' is not quite as vague a word as it sounds. It is possible to mark

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out its field of operation and to analyse to some extent the reasons for its existence. It exists as an affinity rising out of a similar problem faced in a similar manner. Once the problem is isolated it may be possible to see how it got out of hand at last, producing such figures as Hilda and Milly. For the failure of these two young women is directly related to an uncertainty in their authors when they deal with the problem in question. The problem is basically the problem of Europe *versus* America, and conjointly with that, the problem of past *versus* present, and both the past and present *versus* the future, the time problem being only another aspect of the geographical one. The conditions under which the two men attempted to solve the problem were different—all the luck was with James from the start, and very little was with Hawthorne—but however disguised, this conflict between their native allegiances and the centrifugal compulsions of temperament lies at the basis of their resemblance.

The problem is easy to come at in James. It was the wholly conscious concern of his art—almost, one might say, his chief incentive to work, and he analysed it with an unprecedented wealth of knowledge. On the other hand, it is doubtful if Hawthorne was ever conscious of the problem in the same way that James was. At best, he was conscious of it by fits and starts, and he was ill-equipped by background to handle it deliberately. It was too hot a subject for his provincial training, which is not to say anything to his discredit. But he suffered intensely from the tensions that the problems set up. These tensions, which he had been able to utilize effectively in his earlier work, became increasingly intractable, and from the time he visited England as American Consul for Liverpool in 1853 they grew unmanageable in his art. There is a sense in which Hawthorne's art undergoes a long and agonizing martyrdom at the hands of the problem—a problem that he never subjected (despite some penetrating insights in *The English Notebooks*) to the fullest illumination of critical enquiry. But it was a martyrdom without which the international novel of James might not have developed so easily.

The most convenient approach to the problem in Hawthorne is by way of a more widely noted but subsidiary problem in his work—his concern with solitude as a 'crime'. This concern is at the centre of his relation with America, and in understanding it one has made a substantial advance on the other problem. Hawthorne's failure to find an American society in which he might function effectively as an artist initiated a habit of withdrawal during the twelve years after he left Bowdoin College in Maine, but this habit was associated in his mind with a mastering sense of guilt that, in the end, led to an over-emphasis on American positives—an over-emphasis without much conviction because it was centred in the fact that the positives were simply American, which came to be accepted as the essential guarantee. We have already seen this happening in *The Marble Faun*, and it is important to bear in mind that the sharpness with which the conflict

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between the American and European traditions is drawn in that novel is largely the result of Hawthorne's life-long inability to adjust himself practically to the society that, as an American, he wished to believe in. He wished to express his solidarity with it, and this became a nervous necessity in that degree in which he found it difficult to cast aside his dissatisfactions with it. To state the case succinctly: Hawthorne's compulsive affirmation of American positives, particularly in the political sense, led to a rejection of the idea of solitude; and solitude as an expression of aristocratic withdrawal sided with Europe rather than America when the two traditions stated their respective claims. But unfortunately it also seemed to side with the practice of his art. If one may for a moment be guilty of a heavy-handed lining up against each other of elements that were never quite so distinct in Hawthorne's mind, one might say that on one side there was an attraction to solitude, an appreciation of Europe, and a love of the past. This was the side on which Hawthorne's deepest sympathies were engaged, but it was also the side that he distrusted. On the other, there was his democratic and egalitarian denial of solitude, a nervous affirmation of the superiority of America against all comers, and the logically consequential championship of the present and future against the past. Now the tragedy of Hawthorne's case is that his art aligned itself with the side his American conscience could not support, and although Hawthorne conscripted it for the interests he had deliberately chosen, it was always likely to desert at a moment's notice. The pity is that it didn't desert more often. In stating these conclusions in this way before the evidence has been presented, I can only plead the exacerbating tenuity of the issues as they seem to exist in Hawthorne's work. They are as elusive as fog fires, and in threading our way through so much murkiness (even if of a twilight and lovely quality) it is just as well to keep a little map at hand from the first.

The hardships confronting a writer in America before the Civil War were extreme, and Hawthorne encountered almost insuperable difficulties in getting his early work published. There is no need to dwell on these difficulties in detail except to say that they were in some measure the result of conditions accidentally promoted by the political ideals in which Hawthorne believed. His short story, *The Devil in Manuscript,* is entirely autobiographical when he causes Oberon, the author in the piece, to burn his manuscripts (as Hawthorne had burned his own in a fit of discouragement) saying:

> 'I will burn them! Not a scorched syllable shall escape! Would you have me a damned author?—To undergo sneers, taunts, abuse, and cold neglect, and faint praise, bestowed for pity's sake, against the giver's conscience! A hissing and a laughing stock to my own traitorous thoughts! An outlaw from the protection of the grave—one whose ashes every careless foot might spurn, unhonoured in life, and remembered scornfully in death! Am I to bear all this, when yonder fire will insure me

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from the whole? No! There go the tales! May my hand wither when it would write another!"

In causing the sparks from Oberon's manuscripts to roar up the chimney and set fire to the offending town Hawthorne took a very neat, if somewhat vicarious, revenge on the people who had neglected him, and there is a particular bite in the fact that he arranged the fire for a bitterly cold night when all the pumps were frozen.

The guilt which Hawthorne associated with his predilections for solitude—predilections growing naturally out of a society that could reduce Oberon to such a plight—he described (to choose among a number of possible alternatives) in *Ethan Brand*. This is an indictment of solitude in its largest social sense, but it is a failure because the villain of the piece, Ethan Brand himself, is the only character who has any dignity or seems to have any decency. Twenty years before the night on which the story occurs, Ethan Brand had set out from his native village on a typically Hawthornian quest—to find the Unpardonable Sin. He found it only when he

> '. . . had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.'

Hawthorne concludes somewhat flatly: 'Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend.' It is noticeable that the description of Ethan Brand's 'crime' sounds suspiciously as if he had become a novelist.[1] At

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[1]Hawthorne drew a self-portrait in the person of Miles Coverdale, the detached and analytic observer of *Blithedale* whom Henry James admired so much, seeming to find in him almost a portrait of himself. But Holgrave, the young daguerreotypist in *The House of Seven Gables*, is hardly less a portrait of certain aspects of Hawthorne's character than Miles Coverdale is. Hawthorne causes Holgrave to speak of himself in these terms:

> 'But you have no conception what a different kind of heart mine is from your own. It is not my impulse, as regards these two individuals, either to help or hinder; but to look on, to analyse, to explain matters to myself, and to comprehend the drama which, for almost two hundred years, has been dragging its slow length over the ground where you and I now tread. If permitted to witness the close, I doubt not to derive a moral satisfaction from it, go matters how they may.'

Obviously young Holgrave was another 'restless analyst' who ought to have been writing novels instead of taking pictures, and it

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any rate, it seems to point to an irreconcilable conflict in Hawthorne between the demands of his genius and the demands he deemed American society to make on the citizen. He may not have formulated the conflict quite that sharply, but throughout his life it continued to carry on its insidious undermining. In *The Devil in Manuscript* we saw the personal anguish, ending in frustration and social alienation, that Hawthorne experienced from the position of American artists;[2] in *Ethan Brand* we saw how this personal anguish became identified in the citizen's mind with an assertive sense of guilt. A third element enters the picture in a story like *Wakefield*. Wakefield is a man who says goodbye to his wife one day on the pretence of going on a short journey. Instead, for no explicable reason, he takes lodgings in an adjacent street and remains hidden from view for twenty years. He is thought to be dead by his wife and friends, but at the end of that time, again for no explicable reason, he returns one cold and rainy autumn night to the house he had left so many years before. He mounts the stairs and he rejoins his startled widow. The real theme of the story is the question of why Wakefield stayed away for twenty years in solitude. 'He had lost,' as Hawthorne says, 'the perception of singularity in his conduct'; but the crux of the matter seems to be that if one has a vigorous will from the first there will be no danger of losing one's active place in society. Not to assert one's will is to 'lose hold of the magnetic chain of humanity', as Ethan Brand had done, and to become a 'fiend'. One can't help observing that Oberon in burning his manuscripts—that is, by a deliberate act of the will—presumably expiated in some degree his offence against society—his separateness, as it were. But Ethan Brand had only one recourse—to burn himself by jumping into the flaming lime kiln. It was probably—one can't resist the conclusion—a

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is not fantastic to interpret this as Hawthorne's personal comment on himself as artist. Holgrave is certainly not presented as a villain, but it is difficult to discover much difference between Ethan Brand's 'crime' and Holgrave's description of his own heart. Juxtaposing these passages one sees the seeds of an impossible dilemma in Hawthorne's practice that would eventually mean its ruin.

[2]One should also bear in mind this revealing passage from the Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*:

> 'Either of these stern and black-browed Puritans would have thought it quite a sufficient retribution for his sins that after so long a lapse of years the old trunk of the family tree, with so much venerable moss upon it, should have borne, at its topmost bough, an idler like myself. No aim that I have ever cherished would they recognize as laudable; no success of mine, if my life, beyond its domestic scope, had ever been brightened by success, would they deem otherwise than worthless, if not positively disgraceful. "What is he?" murmurs one grey shadow of my fore-

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deliberate effort of the will that caused Hawthorne to attempt to deal with contemporary life in his late novels. But an exercise of the will is not necessarily an artistic success.

In speaking of these three stories I have not wished to introduce them as first-rate specimens of Hawthorne's art. They are not. But they reveal much about Hawthorne's conception of solitude, and we can trace the elements that have been singled out here functioning successfully in Hawthorne's greatest work, *The Scarlet Letter*. This is not an allegory on the woman taken in adultery, but a subtle exploration of moral isolation in America. The following is a key-passage describing the ultimate character of the punishment dealt out to Hester Prynne:

> 'With her native energy of character, and rare capacity, it [the world] could not entirely cast her off, although it had set a mark upon her, more intolerable to a woman's heart than that which branded the brow of Cain. In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. She stood apart from moral interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside, and can no longer make itself seen or felt; no more smile with the household joy, nor mourn with the kindred sorrow; or, should it succeed in manifesting its forbidden sympathy, awakening only terror and horrible repugnance. These emotions, in fact, and its bitterest scorn besides, seemed to be the sole portion that she retained in the universal heart'.

There is a sense in which this is also, like *The Devil in Manuscript*, a commentary on the sanctions directed against the artist, and one feels that the richly embroidered A on Hester's breast might stand for Artist almost as easily as Adultress. To that extent even *The Scarlet Letter* is autobiographical.

Hawthorne's best writing deals with the past, but it is not a past that constitutes a moral retreat from the present, for it was in images of Colonial history that he was able to deal most directly and intelligibly with his own contemporary problems, the things that concerned him most nearly. The reasons for this were the

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fathers to the other. "A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life, what manner of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation, may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!" Such are the compliments bandied between my great grandsires and myself across the gulf of time! And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have interwined themselves with mine.'

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thinness of the American scene—a thinness about which he could be very explicit—and that sense of alienation which was partly the result of the thinness, and which made him ill at ease in dealing with contemporary life. Hawthorne was most contemporary when he was dealing with the American past, and it was there that his critical consciousness was brought most finely into play. One is tempted to say that during his best creative years Hawthorne expatriated himself in time no less than Henry James was to do geographically a few years later. For both men the immediate pressure of the American scene was the reverse of stimulating, and yet it was irrevocably their subject. But it was a subject that had to be seen at an angle and from a proper distance. In this American past—a past in which, incidentally, he acquired an extensive erudition—Hawthorne was able to make discriminations that would be impossible for him later on. In *The Marble Faun* we saw how unhappily Hawthorne could handle the conflict between the American and European traditions, but on the ground of Colonial history he was capable of no such crudeness. He understood perfectly the separate strands that went into the making of American culture, and he was able, with a fine historical sense, to distinguish and evaluate them with unobtrusive tact. It was only when his exigent conscience harried him into the present that his touch became unsteady. For an example of Hawthorne at his best, here is a description of Governor Bellingham's garden from Chapter VII of *The Scarlet Letter*:

> 'Pearl, accordingly, ran to the bow-window, at the farther end of the hall, and looked along the vista of the garden walk, carpeted with closely shaven grass, and bordered with some rude and immature attempt at shrubbery. But the proprietor appeared already to have relinquished, as hopeless, the effort to perpetuate on this side of the Atlantic, in a hard soil and amid the close struggle for subsistence, the native English taste for ornamental gardening. Cabbages grew in plain sight; and a pumpkin-vine, rooted at some distance, had run across the intervening space, and deposited one of its gigantic products directly beneath the hall window; as if to warn the Governor that this great lump of vegetable gold was as rich an ornament as New England would offer him. There were a few rose-bushes, however, and a number of apple trees, probably the descendants of those planted by the Reverend Mr. Blackstone, the first settler of the peninsula; that half-mythological personage, who rides through our early annals seated on the back of a bull.'

The contrast between the English tradition and the American modification being imposed on it is so subtly introduced here that it almost passes without notice. But Hawthorne has achieved a delicate weighing of the two components in which a critical assessment is implicit. The easy, blatant triumph of the pumpkin-vine in the Governor's garden relates itself effectively to the emergence

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of those attitudes and qualities from which American culture would have to grow, and with a just decorum it is not the rose bushes but the pumpkin-vine and its great lump of vegetable gold that Hawthorne offers as the chief visual attraction in the garden—a decoration entirely appropriate and functional. Immediately after the above paragraph Governor Bellingham, with a group of friends, is seen approaching the house down one of the garden avenues:

> 'Governor Bellingham, in a loose gown and easy cap—such as elderly gentlemen loved to endue themselves with, in their domestic privacy—walked foremost, and appeared to be showing off his estate, and expatiating on his projected improvements. The wide circumference of an elaborate ruff, beneath his grey beard, in the antiquated fashion of King James's reign, caused his head to look not a little like that of John the Baptist on a charger. The impression made by his aspect, so rigid and severe, and frost-bitten with more than autumnal age, was hardly in keeping with the appliances of worldly enjoyment wherewith he had evidently done his utmost to surround himself'.

The passage continues, describing in similar detail the companions of Governor Bellingham. This group of black-gowned men, officials and divines, who carry such a weight of European history on their shoulders, who announce it in their very dress and the cut of their beards, following, as they do, hard on the reference to the Reverend Mr. Blackstone seated on the back of a bull, point in a highly dramatic way to that strange blend of ingredients that was producing America. The theme of the English-America contrast is nowhere stated here. It grows out of the details of the picture as naturally as a tree might grow in Governor Bellingham's garden. The control and relevance of the part to the whole is absolute, and the theme in question is so subordinated to the evolving dramatic situation that one may easily overlook its presence. The two fragments that have been quoted are only snippets that lose a great deal out of context, but even in such a piecemeal state it is apparent that Hawthorne could invoke this cultural contrast with a high degree of success. In *The Scarlet Letter* he was able to resolve the contrast artistically; but as he came to focus his attention on the nearer scene, the cleavage between the cultures deepened, and for Hawthorne at least the tension became unmanageable. I have already spoken of Governor Bellingham's pumpkin-vine, and it may be taken as a minor instance of how this resolution was effected. The rude but democratic pumpkin, obtruding itself with peasant manners almost into the Governor's reception hall, both identifies the shortcomings of the country and embellishes its virtues. Hawthorne's hand is very sure: the lovely trellising vine, the echo of Milton's Edenic 'vegetable gold', its friendly familiarity—all this tempers one's regrets that the ornamental gardening was unsuccessful. It is easy to understand how many such images operating with equal effective-

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ness and subtlety in the same direction can resolve the antagonism that Hawthorne failed to keep under control in *The Marble Faun*. But more important still is the fact that the conflict presented itself under different colours in Colonial history. It was not self-conscious in the way it became after the Revolution; it was not even a conflict as much as it was the sense of something new evolving—a positive character in the process of formation, offering the possibilty of critical examination rather than of choice between alternatives. As long as Hawthorne worked in this particular past he was comparatively at ease, for the atmosphere had much of the density that Hawthorne, like James, missed in the America of that day. In a passage from the Preface to *The Marble Faun*, closely resembling a more famous passage from James,[3] Hawthorne wrote:

> 'No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall flowers, need ruins to make them grow'.

That was written in 1859, from Leamington Spa, after Hawthorne had been in Europe for six years, and it shows symptoms of unmistakable strain. One senses an animus behind the double edged compliments to his 'dear native land', but at the same time he is unable to praise Europe for anything but its ruins. The fineness of perception that we glanced at in *The Scarlet Letter* has gone, and we know what a fiasco he made of *The Marble Faun*. When Hawthorne deserted Colonial history for the contemporary scene he lost, somewhat paradoxically, his grasp of contemporary problems. If it is objected that *The House of Seven Gables* is a

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[3]This is the passage from James, or at least part of it: 'No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class—no Epsom nor Ascot!'

James's enumeration is the more affecting when we realize that he is listing the things of which Hawthorne was deprived as an American, and which might be taken as an explanation of some of the human thinness in his work.

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contemporary novel, its success still resides in that sense of the past that suffuses its pages, and which Hawthorne, characteristically, is bent on condemning. He did not have the knowledge or the personal security to deal with cultural antagonisms as such that James took as his special province, and when he allowed them to emerge as the dominant theme in his work he became confused, biased, and ineffectual. He had made his real settlement with Colonial history. But we have seen how his fear of solitude combined with a fear of the past, and led him to invade the modern scene.[4] And the American-European conflict in his late work was farther intensified by his trip to Europe at the age of 49 as American Consul at Liverpool. He was too old to enjoy any of the advantages that flowed in on young Henry James, and apart from some Lord Mayor's banquets and some dull literary dinners in London, he seems to have been exposed to very little good English society.[5] He was thoroughly unsettled by his seven years abroad, and never again recovered the fineness of his association with the American Colonial

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[4]Hawthorne's own feelings about his 'expatriation' in the past may very well have come to resemble Ralph Pendrel's in *The Sense of the Past*. We remember that Ralph's return to the present 'saves' him. He is

> '. . . saved from all the horror of the growing fear of *not* being saved, of being lost, of being *in* the past to stay, heart-breakingly to stay and never know his own original precious Present again; that horror which his conception of his adventure had never reckoned with . . .'

There is an unkind irony in the fact that the very success of Hawthorne's dealings with the American past were based on, and further developed, a kind of awareness that was bound to betray itself. The contemporaneity that he seemed so much in control of there inevitably sent him back to the Present, where the contemporaneity was lost.

[5]The description he gives in *The English Notebooks* of the consulate office in Liverpool in which he had to spend so much of his time underlines the difference between Hawthorne's and James's years in Europe:

> 'My apartment (about twelve feet by fifteen, and of a good height) is hung with a map of the United States, and another of Europe; there is a hideous coloured lithograph of General Taylor, life size, and one or two smaller engraved portraits; also three representations of American naval victories; a lithograph of the Tennessee State-house, and another of the Steamer Empire State. The mantle-piece is adorned with the American Eagle, painted on the wood; and on shelves there are a number of volumes, bound in sheepskin, of the laws of the United States and the Statutes at large. Thus the consular office is a little patch of America, with English life encompassing it on all sides'.

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past. Mr. Randall Stewart has written in his essay 'Hawthorne in England', which appears in his edition of *The English Notebooks*: 'The accumulated result (as exhibited in the journals and letters, in *Our Old Home* and the posthumous novels) is a comparative weighing of the English and the American civilizations, which can scarcely be equalled elsewhere for its painstaking detail.'

If we confine ourselves to the *Notebooks* and disregard *Our Old Home,* which is a dull rewriting of them, the insights occasionally seem extraordinary, but the weighing goes on indefinitely until it becomes clear that Hawthorne is no longer capable of anything more than a series of separate choices which he arranges as counters in some chosen design. He has succeeded in uprooting his sensibility without meaning to do so, and the conditions do not exist in which it might be possible for him to strike new roots in English soil. From this time his work became unsatisfactory in a way one can imagine James's would have done had he returned to America in middle life and remained there. The conditions under which Hawthorne had achieved a poised reconciliation of the diverse elements in his character could not, once abandoned, be re-assumed merely for the asking, and after his return to America his attempt to write a novel dealing with Colonial and Revolutionary times, *Septimius Felton,* is an embarrassing and heavy-handed failure.

It has been argued in this paper that the question of America *versus* Europe is intrinsically involved in Hawthorne's case with the opposition of past and present, and it will be necessary here to examine that aspect of the problem a little more closely. For the American, Europe *is* the past in a symbolic way that it can never quite be for the European himself; and in glancing here at the ambivalence in both James's and Hawthorne's dealings with it the conclusion forces itself that the two men would have had to resemble each other in spite of themselves. They distrusted the past, but they reached out towards it instinctively as towards a totality of experience, and the inadequacy of the American present without a sense of European tradition persisted in tormenting their consciousness. Hawthorne wrote in *The English Notebooks*:

> 'My ancestor left England in 1635. I return in 1853. I sometimes feel as if I myself had been absent these two hundred and eighteen years—leaving England just emerging from the feudal system, and finding it on the verge of Republicanism. It brings the two far separated points very closely together . . .'

This was to become a recurrent and tormenting subject in Hawthorne's later work, and it is one which he takes up again and again in the posthumously published fragments. A young American returns to England and attempts to establish his legal claim to ancient family estates. Hawthorne gets so far, but he never gets further than that, breaking off each time in a confusion of floundering symbols and a despair of finishing. Hawthorne's incoherence on this theme may be partly due to an innate diffi-

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culty in the symbolism of the returned American itself—a difficulty of which he was not sufficiently conscious to deal with it successfully. The image works directly away from the possibility of such a resolution as we examined in the passage devoted to Governor Bellingham's garden. Its tendency is to fuse the two cultures in a single figure, rather than to achieve a skilled counterpointing of their separate characters, allowing each to retain its full identity and integrity, but mutually balancing and supporting each other.[6] In the international novel, as he developed and refined it, James had been able to acquire the necessary skill in counterpoint, and it is with reluctance that one declines the occasion offered here to insert, with appropriate analysis, a Jamesian passage to balance the Bellingham passage of Hawthorne's offered earlier. But such passages are so frequent in James that no one can miss them. They form the very texture of his writing, and James showed us in Gilbert Osmund what the 'fused' American was like. And one should remember that in at least two works, an early story called *A Passionate Pilgrim*, 1872, and *The Sense of the Past*, James attempted to present a character that would not be an American merely exposed to and enlarged by the European experience, but one who returned to Europe as to his proper home. James's knowledge and tact got him through the ordeal pretty well, but it

[6]The preliminary studies for *Dr. Grimshaw's Secret* (written 1860-61) which Mr. Edward Hutchins Davidson has recently published for the first time in his valuable study, *Hawthorne's Last Phase*, are of particular interest here. Hawthorne was not, of course, trying to present a new type of Europeanized American. He kept the contrast between the nations firmly fixed in his mind. But he saw the resolution in what would ultimately be an intolerable fusion: 'It must be shown, I think, throughout that there is an essential difference between English and American character, and the former must assimilate itself to the latter, if there is to be any union.' But Hawthorne offers, to qualify this, pre-Jamesian hints of the possibilities of the international marriage as a more workable solution. Of the English aristocrat in his story, he says: 'I think he should be drawn with a natural generosity and nobleness, doing credit to the best influences of his position; but some misfortune must unavoidably grow out of his position, and ruin him, through the means of the American, who must make amends to the reader's feelings by marrying an Englishwoman, with every prospect of happiness.'

It is very revealing to read these preliminary studies together with the Notes for *The Sense of the Past*. Nothing shows up more strikingly the similarity between the preoccupations of the two men. On the basis of these studies alone, one might say that Hawthorne's interests had shifted on to grounds from which only James's art could provide the saving issue. Hawthorne had raised problems that were technically beyond his solution, but they lead American literature directly into the work of Henry James.

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is significant that *The Sense of the Past* was never finished, while *A Passionate Pilgrim* has a tragic ending—Searle, the American who returns to claim his share of the ancestral estates, discovering before his premature death, not that he is both American and English, but that he is neither in any significant way.

A Passionate Pilgrim, however, is important here only because it reveals how a concern with similar problems caused Hawthorne and James to organize their conceptions quite naturally around similar images. But *The Sense of the Past* is a different matter. Although it seems that James, had he finished the novel, would have offered important modifications to break the symmetry, the nature of the double identity belonging to Ralph Pendrel belongs equally to the present and the past, to America and to Europe. It is nothing less than a symbol into which the whole American problem under the two aspects that have been considered here is compressed. But the compression, or 'fusion', is essentially anathema to the nature of the problem itself, so that the central conceit of James's novel was working against rather than for his meaning. Ralph Pendrel's portrait, or rather the portrait of his ancestor that hangs in No. 9 Mansfield Square, is the integrating point in James's story—the symbol in which the past and the present, Europe and America, become one. But they are not one, and the increasingly attenuated qualifications (when James speaks of *The Sense of the Past* his style is always rarefied, even for the late period) with which he found himself obliged to accommodate his story to that fact threatened to destroy the whole structure, so that we are tempted to say that in Hawthorne's symbol James encountered Hawthorne's failure. This is the essential point, which it has seemed just as well to make at once. But *The Sense of the Past* is important enough in the Hawthorne-James relation to justify a closer look at James involved in working out his difficulties—if floundering in them (rather gracefully of course) wouldn't, indeed, be the better phrase. When he took up once more the unfinished fragment of *The Sense of the Past* fourteen years after he had abandoned it, he wrote a preliminary statement out for reference during the actual composition. Mr. Mathiessen prints it with *The Notebooks*, and it is worth quoting at some length here:

> 'My idea of course—and that's what seems to me really so fine—that of the exchange of identity between my young American of to-day and his relative of upwards of a hundred years ago, or whatever, on the ground of the latter's reviving for the former under the prodigy of the actual man's so intense and so invoked and so fostered historic faculty, clumsily so to dub it, or in other words his sense of the past, the thing he has always wanted to have still more than historic records can give it, the thing forming the title, as the early part of the Introduction gives it, of the remarkable Essay or Study that he has published, a distinguished and striking little effort, and which we have learnt about to begin with. Yes, it glimmers back to

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me that at sight of the picture in the London house—all his comings back to see which, to come in for which, have also from the first been dealt with—he has had the extraordinary emotion of recognizing himself, his very self in the person of an ancestor, as if nothing but his clothes had been altered, to the dress of the time, and it is himself who looks out recognizingly *at* himself, just as the so interestingly painted image looks out recognizingly at *him*. My fantastic idea deals then with the phenomenon of the conscious and understood fusion, or exchange, that takes place between them . . . Well, the sublime idea thrown out to me by the passage in the London house comes back to me as *this*: that there, face to face with my tremendously engaged and interested hero is this alter ego of a past generation of his "race", the inward passion of whose also yearning mind and imagination was the sense of the future—he having so nursed and cherished that, wanted so to project himself into it, that it makes him the very counterpart of his eventual descendant . . . What is involved in my prodigy, and makes the real drama, story or situation of it, is that one or the other of the young men in consequence of what so supernaturally passes between them, steps back or steps forward into the life of the other exactly as that life is at that moment constituted, at that moment going on and being enacted, representing each the other for the persons, the society about him, concerned but with the double consciousness the representation of which makes the thrill and the curiosity of the affair, the consciousness of being the other and yet himself also. What appealed to me as of an intensely effective note of the supernatural and sinister kind was this secret within his breast, that is within the hero's breast (for the two, in the "situation", are reduced to one) of his abnormal nature and of the effect on the others that a dim, vague, attached and yet rather dreadful and distressful sense of it produces on them'.

The saving grace of the conceit—the touch that might have prevented a basic distortion of the reality so symbolized if the novel had been completed—is Ralph Pendrel's consciousness of his abnormal nature. One can't guess quite what James would have done with it, but he gives little indication in the novel and the Notes of working it out with that sureness or perception that characterized his best international novels. We know of course that the Midmores were designed to show up the greater fineness of their American relative[7], but the symbol of the exchanged identity was, by its very nature, absorbent of the differences. Nevertheless, *The Sense of the Past* is important in any consideration of the Hawthorne-James line, for in it we can see them very plainly working shoulder to shoulder. The effect of their industry comes simply to this: despite their frequent or infrequent lapses and failures they established a strategy by which the American, cut off from his antecedents and embarrassed by the burden of his 'commonplace prosperity', might develop a refined consciousness

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of that cultural and racial unity that underlies the divisions of the English-speaking world. It was a tremendously complex problem, and as the world is going, it was and is a problem of such importance that even to-day one hardly dare plot limits to what it may eventually mean in terms of a future English-speaking civilization. The symbolism of *The Sense of the Past* may have belonged to an earlier strategy than James was entitled to employ. It can be argued that a symbolism of identification is basically the result of insecurity and embarrassment—but James was neither insecure nor embarrassed; and if he at last thought it expedient to abandon his unfinished novel, there is yet a propriety in his having taken up so late in life these symbols and themes that were so deeply immersed in the Hawthornian tone.

Mr. T. S. Eliot in his brief essay on James entitled *The Hawthorne Aspect,* an essay so filled with illuminating observations, has remarked that James showed for Hawthorne 'the tenderness of a man who had escaped too early from an environment to be warped or thwarted by it, who had escaped so effectually that he could afford the gift of affection'. While one might wish to discuss and qualify Mr. Eliot's precise meaning in that verb 'escape', the statement pretty nearly sums up the quality and the significance of the relation. If I have preferred the word 'sympathy' here, it is because its meaning seems to point with steadier intention towards those common problems and afflictions that came down on the two Americans when they endeavoured to practice their art. If James felt 'tenderness' for Hawthorne, it was the tenderness of a battle-comrade for a fatally wounded friend, and it would not have been the best kind of tenderness if James (as that insidious 'escape' implies) had deserted the field, and left the problems triumphant. In the foregoing discussion I have tried to define what those problems—or rather, that Problem, was. It exists under various disguises in the work of both men, and especially in Hawthorne's case the disguises are difficult to penetrate. But if, in the end, it was too much for Hawthorne, his precedent and example helped to focus James's attention, and to give him confidence by assuring him that at least one good American had been in that valley before. We have already considered in some detail Hawthorne's influence on two of James's novels. It will always be better to consider his influence as

[7]James was aware that he had used the central conceit of the double or divided identity in his earlier story, *The Jolly Corner.* It is curious to compare this story with *The Sense of the Past,* for while it seems that Ralph Pendrel was to have been presented as a more sensitive and intelligent person than his English friends, this is a reversal of the balance in *The Jolly Corner,* which is anti-American with a vengeance. James seems to have been unaware, however, that he had used the device of the returned American's resemblance to an ancestral portrait in *A Passionate Pilgrim,* a fact which illustrates how ancient was his concern with the themes and symbols of *The Sense of the Past.*

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specifically as possible, for it is extremely elusive of generalizations. That is the good and vital thing about it. But there is still a rather frightening question one is tempted to ask. To what extent did Hawthorne actually modify the development of James's art? Wouldn't James, after all, have been very much himself had Hawthorne never lived and written? Such a question can't really be answered, of course, but it does underline the direction of Hawthorne's influence, and it offers an occasion to advance criticisms of James's art that to-day are too frequently forgotten in a spirit of general acclaim. Intricately woven into the fabric of James's work, side by side with the moral preoccupations, there is another strand of a very different character. I can imagine some hypothetical Devil's Advocate advancing a case like the following against James:

This Devil's Advocate might begin by quoting this extraordinary sentence from James's 1870 essay on Newport: 'For my own part, I prefer to imagine nothing but the graceful and the pure; and with the help of such imaginings you may construct a very pretty sentimental undercurrent to the superficial movement of society.' And then he would pass on to quote from the much later chapter in *The American Scene* entitled 'The Sense of Newport'. This chapter is consecrated to nostalgia, to the evocation of the past in terms of a small group of Americans who in the 'sixties and 'seventies made their home in Newport, 'a collection of the detached, the slightly disenchanted and casually disqualified, and of the resigned and contented, of the socially orthodox: a handful of mild, oh delightfully mild, cosmopolites, united by three common circumstances, that of their having for the most part more or less lived in Europe, that of their sacrificing openly to the ivory idol whose name is leisure, and that, not least, of a formed critical habit.' This group is frequently the dramatis personæ of James's books, and he has a habit of making life disconcertingly easy for them. He is emotionally concerned to give them the climate in which they can most perfectly live, or most graciously suffer. In many of his books—in *The Ambassadors,* for instance—the characters remind one a little of Proust's. But unlike Proust, he wipes the shadow of damnation from under their eyes, and for their sakes he averts his gaze at embarrassing moments. Little Bilham cries out for the Faubourg St. Germain as Proust presented it; but he is safer with James, because James will never bring age and ruins toppling on his head. James's interest is in creating a sophisticated and liveable moment, and in maintaining it from moment to moment. The terrorist explosions towards which his tremendous insights would, in any other writer, move, he must at all events avoid, for the fine high windows of the Jamesian villa are no less breakable than they are valuable. He knows that the material conditions for his values are too deeply embedded in the lives of their opposites to destroy the one without endangering the other. Unlike Proust, he will not play Samson and pull the temple down on our guilty heads. In the end he is a kind of Edwardian Atlas holding up the old cracked heavens.

This at any rate is the argument I conceive the hypothetical

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Devil's Advocate might build up against James, and perhaps there is enough truth in it to make his admirers a little nervous. But in the end such a conception of James is seen to be mostly false. It has just enough basis in fact to emphasize the extent to which he overcame the temptation: and in fact a good deal of the energy in his work arises from his steady and clear-sighted opposition to such an attitude.[8] What I wish to insist on here is simply this: it was against *that* attitude, *that* line of possible development in James, that Hawthorne's example steadily and consistently operated. He

[8]James was fully conscious of this tendency in himself, and he usually (but not always) set it in its proper light. It was precisely *as* a temptation that he gave it a classic formulation in his interesting but uneven story, *Crapy Cornelia*. His description of Mrs. Worthingham's opulently graceful but spiritually indelicate settlement with life is personally felt in a way that is significant:

> 'Her outlook took form to him suddenly as a great square sunny window that hung in assured fashion over the immensity of life. There rose toward it as from a vast swarming *plaza* a high tide of motion and sound; yet it was at the same time as if even while he looked her light gemmed hand, flashing on him in addition to those other things the perfect polish of the prettiest pink finger-nails in the world, had touched a spring, the most ingenious of recent devices for instant ease, which dropped half across the scene a soft-coloured mechanical blind, a fluttered fringed awning of charmingly toned silk, such as would make a bath of cool shade for the favoured friend leaning with her there—that is for the happy couple itself—on the balcony. The great view would be the prospect and privilege of the very state he coveted—since didn't he covet it?—the state of being so securely at her side; while the wash of privacy, as one might count it, the broad fine brush dipped into clear umber and passed, full and wet, straight across the strong scheme of colour, would represent the security itself, all the uplifted inner elegance, the condition, so ideal, of being shut out from nothing and yet of having, so gaily and breezily aloft, none of the burden or worry of anything'.

To state the problem correctly, of course, is not the same as answering it, but it may move a long way in that direction. The weakness of *Crapy Cornelia* lies in the fact that James, when he came to answer the problems implicit in the above quotation, interpreted them to a scale that rendered them too easily tractable, and one cannot be sure that his 48-year-old hero, White-Mason, doesn't overcome the grandiose temptation of luxurious irresponsibility in the present by submitting to an equally pernicious sentimentalization of the past. Nevertheless, the kind of intense awareness exhibited above gives the lie direct to those hostile critics who suppose James to have been gifted with a facility for dismissing those terrors and distresses that lacerate the breasts of the socially minded.

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kept before the later novelist the constant reminder that an American artist must be peculiarly concerned, at a serious moral level, with certain national and social problems, and this shared concern unfolded, in the writings of both men, into still deeper problems and resemblances that became, in their turn, the very texture and meaning of their art. It was Hawthorne, then, who helped make James into an American novelist, and who prevented him from becoming a 'slightly disenchanted and casually disqualified' cosmopolite. The nature of the indebtedness makes it difficult to measure with much precision, but we may be sure that it was largely there, and it is greatly to James's credit that all his life he paid his generous tribute without stint. For those critics who maintain that a 'romancer' like Hawthorne could only have a limited interest, in contrast to the continental writers, for a novelist like James, he has himself supplied the appropriate answer:

> 'I have alluded to the absence in Hawthorne of that quality of realism which is now so much the fashion, an absence in regard to which there will, of course, be more to say; and yet I think I am not fanciful in saying that he testifies to the sentiments of the society in which he flourished almost as pertinently (proportions observed) as Balzac and some of his descendants—Mm. Flaubert and Zola—testifiy to the manners and morals of the French people. He was not a man with a literary theory; he was guiltless of a system, and I am not sure that he had ever heard of Realism, this remarkable compound having (although it was invented some time earlier) come into general use only since his death. . . . Nevertheless he virtually offers the most vivid reflection of New England life that has found its way into literature. . . . Hawthorne's work savours thoroughly of the local soil—it is redolent of the social system in which he had his being'.

MARIUS BEWLEY.

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'THE WINDHOVER'

THERE has been a good deal of interpretative comment on Hopkin's *Windhover,* most of which has done little to elucidate the poem and much to increase its difficulty. The poem is an extraordinarily suggestive one and sets in motion a most lively and complex interplay of thoughts and feelings. Critics have responded to these and described them vividly, but too seldom have they traced the initial statement of the poem through its syntax explicitly enough for other, perhaps less practised readers, and too often have they elaborated their own description under the influence of a knowledge of Hopkin's life and an inability to sympathize (in the fullest sense) with his submission to the Jesuit discipline. Dr. Richards, for instance, in a sensitive, appreciative and, indeed, helpful account of the poem, says: 'The poet's heart has been in hiding, from the life of the senses, from the life of imagination and emotional risk, from speculation . . . It has been hiding in the routine of meditation, in doctrine taken as understood or left unexplored, in the seeming security of a won shelter'.[1] This is surely something *added* to the poem by the psychologist seeking involuntary self-revelation, and seeking it with a mind predisposed by attitudes to what he knows of Hopkin's life. I am not alone in thinking that this account of life in a religious order is crudely inadequate, nor in believing that the Hopkins documents themselves show it to be so. My point, however, is that it is added by the critic. It may be said that this is a personal evaluation by Dr. Richards interjected into one section of his comment, which can easily be subtracted by another reader, leaving the main analysis unaffected. But this is not really so. It has got into the analysis, and as the immediate sense-movement of the poem is not traced this description of what the piece is thought to stand for readily affixes itself to what is not an easy poem. It will be seen, I think, from my ensuing remarks that I do not wish to oppose by any means all that is in the interpretation of Dr. Richards. It is a matter, above all, of emphasis and justifiable particularization. Dr. Richards gives, in fact, as he is perfectly entitled to do, a *comment on* the poem rather than an *exposition of* it, and in it leaves in doubt quite how he is taking various phrases in the piece. Given a definite understanding of the plain sense, the meaning that is poetically evoked will arise from it: a satisfactory statement of this plain sense is what has been lacked by readers seeking help. Some have variously taken the

[1]Quoted by E. E. Phare (*The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* Cambridge, 1933). This is not from his article in *The Dial,* Sept. 1926, as W. H. Gardner thinks, but from a Comment written specially for Miss Phare.

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'thee' in the sestet as spoken by Christ to the windhover, by the poet to the windhover, by Christ to the poet and by the poet to himself; Mr. Empson's Freudian tricks with 'Buckle' are celebrated, and there has been much difficulty over 'AND'. The appearance of yet another, lengthy, consideration[2] which in spite of much intelligent comment goes finally astray, leads me to think that there is still room for certain suggestions about the poem: and the tenaciously adhesive mess of misunderstanding I have seen deposited in students' minds after their recourse to existing critical comment is an additional urge to making them.

The Windhover: To Christ our Lord is the title of the poem.[3] This, I suggest, means that it is *addressed to* and not merely dedicated to or written in honour of Christ. Hopkins uses words with care even in titles, and reference to other subtitled poems of his will support this assertion. There is, for example, *The Silver Jubilee: To James . . .*, there is *To R.B.* and *Spring and Fall: to a young child*; all of which are spoken directly to the persons of their titles. To be contrasted with these are *In honour of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, The Wreck of the Deutschland / To the happy memory of five Franciscan Nuns* and *Tom's Garland: upon the unemployed*, in none of which would 'to' normally arouse surprise or objection, I think. The second person used in the poem is the second person singular 'thee', commonly employed by others for vaguely elevating and 'poetic' purposes but by the mature Hopkins rarely except as referring to God (and then without the customary capital initial). He allows it to St. Francis (*Wreck of the Deutschland*), Oxford (*Duns Scotus's Oxford*), Earth (*Ribblesdale*), Despair (*Carrion Comfort*) and the Virgin Mary (*The Blessed Virgin compared . . .*), but not to Margaret (*Spring and Fall*) or even to Peace (*Peace*). We begin then, I would submit, with the strong probability that Hopkins is speaking to Christ throughout. That this is so seems to me evident from a careful reading of the poem itself: I only adduce the above external evidence because so many readers have not found it so.

The next thing of importance is to observe that the terms of appreciation 'minion' and 'dauphin' are, though not slighting, none the less indicative of something less than supremacy. Neither is equivalent to, say, 'monarch' (of the 'morning' or the 'kingdom

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[2]'What Does *The Windhover* Mean?' by Raymond V. Schoder, S.J., in *Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman Weyand, S.J. (London, 1949).

[3]Fr. W. A. M. Peters in his *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1948), p. 86, discards the view I put forward in this paragraph, saying: 'be it only remembered that Hopkins did not dedicate this poem to Christ until some six years after he had written it!' I don't know whether this is correct or not, for his description of the relevant MS books is incomplete and inaccurate, but even if it is, does it destroy the value of the title?

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of daylight'); both bear a connotation of the subordinate. This, as Hopkins moves from his evocation of the bird's flight to noting his response to it, as he brings his eyes back to earth with 'My heart in hiding', is increased in 'a bird' (by the indefinite article, the rhythm and the internal rhyme with 'stirred') and is clinched in the exclamation '—the achieve of, the mastery of the *thing*!' (my italics) which is a present-tense ejaculation (or why the comma and dash that precede it?) and not in apposition to 'bird' as indirect object of 'stirred'. (This shift into a neutral gear, as it were, among tenses is important as a transition from the past of 'I caught this morning' and 'stirred for a bird' to the present—a kind of generalizing, 'meditative' present as opposed to a 'happening' one—of 'here buckle', with both referring to the Falcon and considerations about it.)

This element in 'minion', 'dauphin', 'bird', 'thing' is then concentrated in the 'brute' of 'Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume' which 'here' in the effortless mastery of the bird's flight unite, 'buckle'—and really 'Buckle!' (with all the varied life of meaning of the word, except that of the contradictory intransitive 'crumple'). They are splendid, enviable qualities, for the effect of 'brute' is to define subtly, to discriminate, not disparage, but the forms of them here in view are of the brute creation; which makes it difficult to hold, as someone has proposed, that the poet here pleads that they be 'buckled' into his own being. To claim that the exclamation mark denotes an imperative is mistaken. Hopkins seldom uses it with such (only, I think, in *The Loss of the Eurydice*) though he is extremely fond of it in his writings; and, as I hope to make clear, the imperative tense would dislocate the precise and lucid syntactical movement of the piece.

'All these splendid qualities are displayed in the action of the gliding falcon', says the poet, 'PLUS that fire which breaks from *thee*, Christ, as the windhover windhovers,[4] to irradiate the bird, to strike from the bird to the sense of the watcher, a fire that is a billion times told lovelier, more dangerous, exciting,[5] dominating,[6] O my chevalier'. 'Chevalier', for Christ, the knight to whom is the poet's allegiance, grows from the sequence of chivalric associations in 'minion', 'dauphin', 'riding', 'striding' and 'rein'—an 'underthought', to use Hopkins's word, which seems to spring from the thought of hawking. The first lines of another poem, *God's*

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[4]*Cf.* 'Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; . . .
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came*'.
(Poem 34, 2nd Ed.)

[5]*Cf.* 'To what serves mortal beauty—dangerous; does set dancing blood . . .' (Poem 38).

[6]*Cf.* older sense of 'danger'.

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Grandeur, may help to clarify my description of 'the fire that breaks':

> 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
> It will flame out like shining from shook foil . . .'

'AND' is 'and' used with the maximum active, almost verbal sense (not strange in emphatic colloquial speech and corresponding to the forcible Latin 'atque'). 'Then' makes its point—namely, 'when the windhover windhovers'—but does not receive a main stress: if one reads 'AND the fire that breaks from thee thén, the stressed 'AND' is totally unnecessary (for rhythm as for meaning) and only confuses.

'No wonder of it—and this should not be cause for surprise after all,' Hopkins then continues, 'seeing that so laboured and little spectacular or ecstasy-provoking an activity as the sheer plod of ploughing will (as effort and implement combine in functioning, in "going themselves") cause a lovely glitter from the ploughshare; and even immobile inanimate blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, will suddenly fall and (in acting as embers, that is, in breaking and dying) will display a beautiful gold-vermilion within'. The 'ah my dear', with its store of meaning from George Herbert, sufficiently obviously infuses into the lines the personal regret and the grouping of himself with plough and embers, together with the sympathy with Christ (who, too, was broken and died), which carry the reconciliation of the speaker to the lack of obvious joyous mastery in himself, a man, in comparison with that of the Falcon; which is the poem's final significance, and one which to become manifest or, indeed, valid, does not require information about or judgment of the poet's life in the Society of Jesus, but which can be and has been distorted by the intrusion of biographical elements into the analysis of the poem.[7] Only an indicative tense leads accurately to the 'no wonder of it'. This must be a present indicative 'buckle', as I have suggested, unless the indicative comes in with 'AND the fire . . .' taken as following an imperative 'buckle' (transitive or intransitive)[8] with the meaning 'and the fire that breaks from thee *then* is a billion times told lovelier'; but this would put the emphasis on 'then' and remove all point from the stressed 'AND'. Similarly, the Empsonian intransitive 'crumple' sense of 'buckle' would demand an emphasised 'then' and an unstressed 'and'; or, if not, would

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[7]Which is not to deny, however, that the significance may be susceptible of greater particularization if one is using the poem not as a poem but as material for a biographical study. But that is a different matter—and has its dangers too.

[8]As 'Thou, Christ, buckle brute beauty, etc., here in me'—transitive; and 'Brute beauty, etc., come, buckle here in me'—intransitive. The ultimate difference in meaning would be slight, but, as I have maintained above, the 'brute' should rule out such a plea, even if the possible subsequent drifts of sense did not fail to lead naturally into the 'no wonder of it'.

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involve the billion times told lovelier fire in the crumpling and make nonsense of the parallel instances of the shining ploughshare and glowing embers.

A point which belongs earlier in this comment but which can most conveniently be made here is that the particular suggestion of the opening 'I caught' is of the difficulty of observing a bird without alarming it, which gives the primary reference of 'in hiding'; though there are the notes too of being infected by the sight and of the caught breadth of admiration in the beginning, and, later, in 'hiding' probable implications concerning the watcher's state of heart, which, Jesuit or quite ordinarily earthbound, is not one of unencumbered purely instinctive flight.

Much of the meaning and feeling of the poem has been seized and described effectively by commentators, but it has often been attached to the wrong parts and ordered in a wrong pattern, with the result that the poet's control of it, his composition of it in a precise significance, has been disturbed. I think it will be found that the essentials of other interpretations (the details of which this commentary is either explicitly or implicitly opposing) have their place in the poem as I have expounded it, but frequently they are to be obtained by inference, not directly from the words to which their proposers have ascribed them. Sometimes, that is, an approximately right general impression has been obtained by critics, but, lacking the control of accurately perceived initial sense, it has been put back, so to speak, into the poem at the wrong places, and the final meaning has been deformed. For example, 'My heart in hiding stirred for a bird . . .' followed by the relishing recital of the bird's beauties, clearly tells us that the poet feels and regrets an absence of such things in himself: insist, as Mr. Empson does, on forcing this implication into explicit statement by suggesting 'they do buckle here . . . like a bicycle wheel . . . in the case of the Jesuit' or 'come, and buckle yourself here . . . like a military belt' and nothing essential is gained, while the syntactical movement is disrupted and false emphases are suggested. Miss Phare puts it that the first half of the sestet may be Christ saying to the poet: 'When you subject all your faculties and all material obstacles to your desire to do the thing you were meant to do, the fire, the beauty which to my eyes follows in your wake is a thousand times greater than that of the trail left by the kestrel'. The idea that Christ speaks these lines seems to me quite unsupportable, the proposal suggests great imprecision of writing in the lines, and, again, the essentials are fully, but poetically, present in Hopkins's appraisal of the God-sent irradiating fire as '. . . times told lovelier' than the simple brute qualities and his following realization of a similar irradiation in even the dull embers and the plodding plough to which the feeling of 'ah my dear' compares him. Fr. Peters says: 'There is in my opinion nothing very obscure about the thought of [the sestet] . . . it is the bird in action that strikes the poet as ever so much more beautiful than the bird just hanging on the wing' and takes this as firmly establishing it that the whole poem is addressed

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to the windhover. It should be evident that the importance of the bird in action with its consequent accession of loveliness has its place in the account I have given above: what Fr. Peters overlooks is that if the 'fire' is solely in the bird, if 'thee' and 'chevalier' refer to the bird, there is no separateness between 'brute beauty', etc., and the 'fire' to warrant the violently conjunctive 'AND', that it is, further, the 'then' not the 'and' that requires the stress, and that the Herbert orientation of 'ah my dear' is being ignored. In fact, the idea of a special beauty flaming out when things fulfil their purpose is not released into the poem until the last three lines, the effect of which plays back on what has gone before. It is not stated fully where Fr. Peters wishes to locate it: for it to be there would require a quite unimaginable sense of the purely passive in 'beauty'. 'valour', 'act', 'air', 'pride' and 'plume' if the lines were to have point. These few examples of partial and misplaced understanding can be considered representative and should serve to illustrate my point. To criticize in turn each, as I see it, mistaken interpretation would be to produce a tedious series of moves and countermoves not unlike those gone through in solving a chess problem: it seems more reasonable to offer my account of the poem and let those who are interested in Hopkins make their own further comparisons.

I have been concerned in this article only with exposition of a very plain kind and have not attempted to bring out the ways in which the poetic effects are made or to elaborate and criticize the effect of those effects. Much that is valuable has been written of them already, but never, I think, has it been accompanied by an accurate, full and close tracing of the sense. This has meant not only that readers have received less help than they could wish but, I believe, that the commentators themselves have failed in comprehension.

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THE NOVEL AS DRAMATIC POEM (IV):

'ST. MAWR'

ST. MAWR, I suppose, would commonly be described as a long short-story—a *nouvelle*, rather than a novel. Actually, that description, with its limiting effect, has a marked infelicity. It certainly doesn't suggest the nature or weight of the astonishing work of genius that Lawrence's 'dramatic poem' is. St. Mawr seems to me to present a creative and technical originality not less remarkable than that of *The Waste Land*, and to be, more unquestionably than that poem, completely achieved, a full and self-sufficient creation. It can hardly strike the admirer as anything but major.

The comparative reference isn't random: *St. Mawr*, too, has the Waste Land for theme. To say this is to suggest scope as well as intensity, and the suggestion isn't idle. There are, besides the horse and the two grooms, only three main actors, but, at the end of the hundred and eighty odd pages, it is as if we had had a representative view of the civilized world. Lawrence's art, then, commands a pregnancy and a concentrated force not suggested by 'tale' or '*nouvelle*'. Yet what strikes us in the opening of *St. Mawr* is not a portentousness or any kind of tension, but a freedom—something extraordinarily like careless ease:

> 'Lou Witt had had her own way so long, that by the age of twenty-five she didn't know where she was. Having one's way landed one completely at sea.
>
> 'To be sure for a while she had failed in her grand love affair with Rico. And then she had had something really to despair about. But even that had worked out as she wanted. Rico had come back to her, and was dutifully married to her. And now, when she was twenty-five and he was three months older, they were a charming married couple. He flirted with other women still, to be sure. He wouldn't be the handsome Rico if he didn't. But she had "got" him. Oh yes! You had only to see the uneasy backward glance at her, from his big blue eyes: just like a horse that is edging away from its master: to know how completely he was mastered.
>
> 'She, with her odd little *museau*, not exactly pretty, but very attractive; and her quaint air of playing at being well-bred, in a sort of charade game; and her queer familiarity with foreign cities and foreign languages; and the lurking sense of being an outsider everywhere, like a sort of gipsy, who is at home anywhere and nowhere: all this made up her charm and her failure. She didn't quite belong.
>
> 'Of course she was American: Lousiana family, moved down

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to Texas. And she was moderately rich, with no close relation except her mother. But she had been sent to school in France when she was twelve, and since she had finished school, she had drifted from Paris to Palermo, Biarritz to Vienna and back via Munich to London, then down again to Rome. Only fleeting trips to her America.

'So what sort of American was she, after all?

'And what sort of European was she either? She didn't "belong" anywhere. Perhaps most of all in Rome, among the artists and the Embassy people.

'It was in Rome she had met Rico. He was an Australian, son of a government official in Melbourne, who had been made a baronet. So one day Rico would be Sir Henry, as he was the only son. Meanwhile, he floated round Europe on a very small allowance—his father wasn't rich in capital—and was being an artist'.

The economy of those opening pages, establishing the present from which the drama starts, is very remarkable. For what looks like carelessness—the relaxed, idiomatic and even slangy familiarity—is actually precision and vivid firsthandness. And we soon discover that there is no limit to the power of easy and inevitable transitions. For Lawrence writes out of the full living language with a flexibility and a creative freedom for which I can think of no parallel in modern times. His writing seems to have the careless ease of extraordinarily fluent and racy speech; but you see, if you stop to cast a critical eye back over the page, that everything is precisely and easily *right*—the slangy colloquialism, the flippant cliché given an emotional intensity, the 'placing' sardonic touch, and, when it comes (as it so marvellously can at any moment), the free play of poetic imagery and imaginative evocation, sensuous and focally suggestive. 'Il écrit extrêment mal': I remember my surprise at coming on that about Lawrence in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. years ago, above Mr. Eliot's name. It is true that Lawrence wasn't interested in style; no great writer could be less like Flaubert—he is as unlike Flaubert as Shakespeare is. But he does precisely what he wants to do, or, rather, what the grasped, the realized theme that possesses him demands.

The opening pages are sardonic comedy, and it looks as if we are going to have merely a variant of that admirable short story, *Mother and Daughter*. Rico and Lou, though 'they reacted badly on each other's nerves,' and he 'couldn't stand Mrs. Witt, and Mrs. Witt couldn't stand him',

> '. . . couldn't get away from one another, even though in the course of their rather restrained correspondence he informed her that he was "probably" marrying a very dear girl, friend of his childhood, only daughter of one of the oldest families in Victoria. Not saying much.
>
> 'He didn't commit the probability, but reappeared in Paris,

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wanting to paint his head off, terribly inspired by Cézanne and by old Renoir. He dined at the Rotonde with Lou and Mrs. Witt, who, with her queer democratic New Orleans sort of conceit looked round the drinking-hall with savage contempt, and at Rico as part of the show. "Certainly", she said, "when these people here have got any money, they fall in love on a full stomach. And when they've got no money they fall in love with a full pocket. I never was in a more disgusting place. They take their love like some people take after-dinner pills".

'She would watch with her arching, full, strong grey eyes, sitting there erect and silent in her well-bought American clothes. And then she would deliver some such charge of grape-shot. Rico always writhed.

'Mrs. Witt hated Paris: "this sordid, unlucky city", she called it. "Something unlucky is bound to happen to me in this sinister, unclean town", she said. "I feel *contagion* in the air of this place. For heaven's sake, Louise, let us go to Morocco or somewhere".

' "No mother dear, I can't now. Rico has proposed to me, and I have accepted him. Let us think about a wedding, shall we?"

' "There!" said Mrs. Witt. "I said it was an unlucky city!" '

The marriage is not a success—as Mrs. Witt, 'watching as it were from outside the fence, like a potent well-dressed demon, full of uncanny energy and a shattering sort of sense', realizes almost immediately. And we note with what easy economy the different values of the main actors in the drama are established: Rico, representative of modern civilized 'life'; the formidable Mrs. Witt, who hardly disguises her contempt for him; and Lou, who can't happily accept either what Rico *is* or her mother's satisfaction in mere destructive negativity. Lou's sense of the nature of the unsuccess of her marriage is brought to full consciousness by the stallion, St. Mawr, and we note how we are sensitized beforehand to take his significance as soon as he makes his entrance. An instance occurred in the opening passage quoted above: 'You had only to see the uneasy backward glance at her, from his big blue eyes: just like a horse that is edging away from its master: to know how completely he was mastered'. And here is the consequence of Mrs. Witt's will to ride in the Park, where Lou, 'for very decency's sake' ('Mrs. Witt was *so* like a smooth, levelled, gun-metal pistol, Lou had to be a sort of sheath'), must ride with her:

' "Rico dear, you must get a horse".

'The tone was soft and southern and drawling, but the overtone had a decisive finality. In vain Rico squirmed—he had a way of writhing and squirming which perhaps he had caught at Oxford. In vain he protested that he couldn't ride, and that he didn't care for riding. He got quite angry, and his handsome

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arched nose tilted and his upper lip lifted from his teeth, like a dog that is going to bite. Yet daren't quite bite.

'And that was Rico. He daren't quite bite. Not that he was really afraid of the others. He was afraid of himself, once he let himself go. He might rip up in an eruption of life-long anger all this pretty-pretty picture of a charming young wife and a delightful little home and a fascinating success as a painter of fashionable, and at the same time "great" portraits: with colour, wonderful colour, and at the same time form, marvellous form. He had composed this little *tableau vivant* with great effort. He didn't want to erupt like some suddenly wicked horse—Rico was really more like a horse than a dog, a horse that might go nasty any moment. For the time, he was good, very good, dangerously good".

Rico is the antithesis of St. Mawr; he represents the irremediable defeat of all that St. Mawr stands for. Nevertheless, as the passage just quoted conveys, the frustrated drives of life are still there, down below, always threatening trouble in Rico, and making security and satisfaction impossible. He's always in danger of 'making a break' of the kind for which St. Mawr becomes notorious.

And, we are told, Rico 'was being an artist'. As that way of putting it conveys, he's *not*, in Lawrence's sense, an artist: his 'being' an artist is simply a manifestation of his inability to be anything but superficial; to see anything except out of his superficially and deceptively 'conscious' 'personality'. Introduced to the stallion that has had so profound an effect on Lou, he can only say:

' "Yes, dear, he certainly *is* beautiful! such a marvellous colour! Almost orange! But rather large, I should say, to ride in the Park."

' "No, for you he's perfect. You are so tall".

' "He'd be marvellous in a composition. That colour!" And all Rico could do was to gaze with the artist's eye at the horse, with a glance at the groom'.

This comes just after the rendering of the first impact of St. Mawr on Lou. She had found herself slipping away at every opportunity from the charming little house in Westminster to the mews where her sorrel mare Poppy is kept: 'Whatever it was, her life with Rico in the elegant little house, and all her social engagements, seemed like a dream, the substantial reality of which was those mews in Westminster, her sorrel mare, the owner of the mews, Mr. Saintsbury, and the grooms he employed'. Then she is shown St. Mawr:

'The wild, brilliant, alert head of St. Mawr seemed to look at her out of another world. It was as if she had had a vision, as if the walls of her own world had suddenly melted away, leaving her in a great darkness, in the midst of which the large, brilliant eyes of that horse looked at her with demonish question, while his

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naked ears stood up like daggers from the naked lines of his inhuman head, and his great body glowed red with power.

'What was it? Almost like a god looking at her terribly out of the everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse; great, glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question, and containing a white blade of light like a thread. What was his non-human question, and his uncanny threat? She didn't know.'

By now it is plain that we have to do with much more than sardonic comedy. To call St. Mawr a poetic symbol doesn't help much. To call him a sexual symbol is positively misleading. In fact, this 'story about a stallion' refutes in the most irrefutable of ways, for those who take what it offers, the common notion that Lawrence is obsessed with sex, or preaches some religion of sex, or is more preoccupied with sex than the T. S. Eliot of *The Waste Land*. The marriage between Lou and Rico, this 'attachment of the will and the nerves', does indeed, the datum is given us, fail at the level of sex, in becoming 'more like a friendship, Platonic'; but the failure there is the index of a transcending failure.

St. Mawr seemed to look at Lou 'out of another world': this kind of suggestion in Lawrence, irresistibly (one would have thought) as his art conveys it, is often dismissed as 'romantic'—that is, as an indulgence of imagination or fancy that cannot, by the mature, be credited with any real significance or taken seriously. The reader who is inclined to 'place' so the rendering, quoted from above, of the first effect of St. Mawr on Lou should pay heed to what follows—to the account of the immediate consequence for Lou's relations with Rico. 'No matter where she was, what she was doing, at the back of her consciousness loomed a great, over-aweing figure out of a dark background', and Rico senses something unusual:

' "You are thinking about something, Lou dear!" Rico said to her that evening.

'He was so quick and sensitive to detect her moods—so exciting in this respect. And his big, slightly prominent blue eyes, with the whites a little bloodshot, glanced at her quickly, with searching, and anxiety, and a touch of fear, as if his conscience were always uneasy. He, too, was rather like a horse—but forever quivering with a sort of cold, dangerous mistrust, which he covered with anxious love.

'At the middle of his eyes was a central powerlessness, that left him anxious It used to touch her to pity, that central look of powerlessness in him. But now, since she had seen the full, dark, passionate blaze of power and of different life in the eyes of the thwarted horse, the anxious powerlessness of the man drove her mad. Rico was so handsome, and he was so self-controlled, he had a gallant sort of kindness and a real worldly shrewdness. One had to admire him: at least *she* had to.

'But after all, and after all, it was bluff, an attitude. He kept it all working in himself, deliberately. It was an attitude.

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She read psychologists who said that everything was an attitude. Even the best of everything. But now she realized that, with men and women, everything is an attitude only when something else is lacking. Something is lacking and they are thrown back on their own devices. That black fiery flow in the eyes of the horse was not "attitude". It was something much more terrifying, and real, the only thing that was real. Gushing from the darkness in menace and question, and blazing out in the splendid body of the horse'.

There we have it, the preoccupation that, in Lou Carrington (and in Lawrence) so far transcends sex; 'real'—the something other than attitude; the *real* that, surely, we should be able to oppose to the attitudes, to distinguish *them* for what they are. 'Attitudes' belong to the 'personality', the life of 'ideas' and will and nerves. What else is there? Lawrence believes—knows—that there is, or should be, something else—he believes that 'sincerity' can have a meaning; and if this conviction, which carries with it a belief that irreverence, and an incapacity for awed wonder in the face of life, are deathly, is 'romantic', then Lawrence deserves to be called that.

There is a passage in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* that comes in aptly here; it might have been written by way of helping us to give an adequate account of the stallion and of the significance that he focusses:

'The body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. The body feels real hunger, real thirst, real joy in the sun or the snow, real pleasure in the smell of roses or the look of a lilac bush; real anger, real sorrow, real love, real tenderness, real warmth, real passion, real hate, real grief. All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognized by the mind. We may hear the most sorrowful piece of news, and only feel a mental excitement. Then, hours after, perhaps in sleep, the awareness may reach the bodily centres, and true grief wrings the heart.

'How different they are, mental feelings and real feelings. Today, many people live and die without having had any real feelings—though they have had a "rich emotional life" apparently, having showed strong mental feeling. But it is all counterfeit. In magic, one of the so-called "occult" pictures represents a man standing, apparently, before a flat table mirror, which reflects him from the waist to the head, so that you have the man from head to waist, then his reflection downwards from waist to head again. And whatever it may mean in magic, it means what we are today, creatures whose active emotional self has no real existence, but is all reflected downwards from the mind. Our education from the start has *taught* us a certain range of emotions, what to feel and what not to feel, and how to feel the feelings we allow ourselves to feel. All the rest is just non-existent. . . . The higher emotions are strictly dead. They have to be faked.

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'And by higher emotions we mean love in all its manifestations, from genuine desire to tender love, love of our fellowmen, and love of God: we mean love, joy, delight, hope, true indignant anger, passionate sense of justice and injustice, truth and untruth, honour and dishonour, and real belief in *anything*: for belief is a profound emotion that has the mind's connivance'.

By 'body', then, Lawrence means all that deep spontaneous life which is not at the beck and call of the conscious and willing mind, and so in that sense cannot be controlled by it, though it can be thwarted and defeated. St. Mawr, the stallion, *is* that life. And in presenting the drama in which the stallion figures so centrally Lawrence leaves us unable to doubt that his essential—and triumphant—concern is to vindicate 'love, joy, delight, hope, true indignant anger, passionate sense of justice and injustice, truth and untruth, honour and dishonour', and the capacity for real belief. It is an astonishing triumph of the highest creative art.

As we have seen, the significance of St. Mawr is first imparted to us through Lou's sense of it. It is developed and enforced by a wealth of poetic and dramatic means. We may take for illustration the way in which Rico is played off against Lewis, the Welsh groom.

'He peered straight at her from under his overhanging black hair. He had pale grey eyes, that looked phosphorescent, and suggested the eyes of a wild cat peering intent from under the darkness of some bush where it lies unseen. Lou, with her brown, unmatched, oddly perplexed eyes, felt herself found out. "He's a common little fellow", she thought to herself. "But he knows a woman and a horse, at sight". Aloud she said, in her southern drawl:

' "How do you think he'd be with Sir Henry?"

'Lewis turned his remote, coldly watchful eyes on the young baronet. Rico was tall and handsome, and balanced on his hips. His face was long and well-defined, and with the hair taken straight back from the brow. It seemed as well-made as his clothing, and as perpetually presentable. You could not imagine his face dirty, or scrubby and unshaven, or bearded, or even moustached. It was perfectly prepared for social purposes. If his head had been cut off, like John the Baptist's, it would have been a thing complete in itself, would not have missed the body in the least. The body was perfectly tailored. The head was one of the famous "talking heads" of modern youth, with eyebrows a trifle Mephistophelian, large blue eyes a trifle bold, and curved mouth thrilling to death to kiss'.

The force of this needs no explaining. 'If his head had been cut off . . . it would have been a thing complete in itself, it would not have missed the body in the least'—all the same, Rico has a strong desire to own and to ride St. Mawr, till he finds him too dangerous: he cannot be happy in his deficiency. Lewis, of course, 'the little aboriginal Lewis', gets on perfectly well with St. Mawr—

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'he goes with the horse'. ('When I speak to him', says Mrs. Witt, 'I never know whether I'm speaking to a man or a horse'.) He has what Rico lacks—or *is* what Rico is not. He explains the ease of his own relations with the stallion, whom the gentlemen have found too much for them, by saying that, like Phoenix the other groom, he is 'different'.

Mrs. Witt, with her conscious mind, sees the difference as simple inferiority. After the sardonic comedy of the episode in which she cuts his hair, we have this (a passage that, coming where it does, illustrates the delicacy and range of Lawrence's poetic method):

> ' "It is extraordinary what hair that man has!" said Mrs. Witt. "Did I tell you when I was in Paris, I saw a woman's face in the hotel that I thought I knew? I couldn't place her, till she was coming towards me. *Aren't you Rachel Fannière?* she said. *Aren't you Janette Leroy?* We hadn't seen each other since we were girls of twelve and thirteen at school in New Orleans. *Oh!* she said to me. *Is every illusion doomed to perish? You had such wonderful golden curls! All my life I've said, Oh, if only I had such lovely hair as Rachel Fannière! I've seen those beautiful golden curls of yours all my life. And now Imeet you, you're grey!* Wasn't that terrible, Louise? Well, that man's hair made me think of it—so thick and curious. It's strange, what a difference there is in hair; I suppose it's because he's just an animal—no mind! There's nothing I admire in a man like a good *mind*. Your father was a very clever man, and all the men I've admired have been clever. But isn't it curious now, I've never cared much to touch their hair. How strange life is! If it gives one thing, it takes away another".'

As this passage shows, she has actually been affected, in the depths of herself by something other than 'mind' in Lewis. The discussion that follows between her and her daughter offers a good example of a method that, as part of the complex process of establishing his values and significances, Lawrence can use with great delicacy. They discuss what may be called his central theme, and while doing so in a wholly dramatic way, bring to the point of explicitness the essential work of implicit definition that has been done by image, action and symbolic presentation. By the end of the exchange certain possibilities of misunderstanding have been eliminated.

> ' "Why, mother!" said Lou impatiently. "I think one gets so tired of your men with mind, as you call it. There are so many of that sort of clever men. And there are lots of men who aren't very clever, but are rather nice: and lots are stupid. It seems to me there's something else besides mind and cleverness, or niceness or cleanness. Perhaps it is the animal. Just think of St. Mawr! I've thought so much about him. We call him an animal, but we never know what it means. He seems a far greater mystery to

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me than a clever man. He's a horse. Why can't one say in the same way, of a man: *He's a man*? There seems no mystery in being a man. But there's a terrible mystery in St. Mawr".

'Mrs. Witt watched her daughter quizzically.

' "Louise", she said, "you won't tell me that the mere animal is all that counts in a man. I will never believe it. Man is wonderful because he is able to *think*".

' "But is he?" cried Lou, with sudden exasperation. "Their thinking seems to me all so childish: like stringing the same beads over and over again. Ah, men! They and their thinking are all so *paltry*. How can you be impressed?"

'Mrs. Witt raised her eyebrows sardonically.

' "Perhaps I'm not—any more", she said with a grim smile'.

As the conversation proceeds, Lou makes it plain that neither St. Mawr nor Lewis represents all that she would wish to find in a man. She doesn't dispute that Lewis 'is a servant', and though she says he has 'far more real mind than . . . any of the clever men', 'he has a good intuitive mind, he knows things without thinking them', she is far from suggesting that the ideal man wouldn't be able to think. She repudiates any backing of 'blood' and 'instinct' against intelligence, and she repudiates any primitivistic leaning.

' "Don't be silly, mother. That's much more your subconscious line, you admirer of Mind.—I don't consider the cave man is a real human animal at all. He's a brute, a degenerate".'

What she wants, in fact, is the real intelligence, the power of really thinking, that the clever men seem to her not to have:

' "I don't know one single man who is a proud living animal. I know they've left off really thinking. But then men always do leave off really thinking, when the last bit of wild animal dies in them".

' "Because we have minds".

' "We have no minds once we are tame, mother. Men are all women, knitting and crochetting words together".'

' "He stands where one can't get at him. And he burns with life. And where does his life come from, to him? That's the mystery. That great burning life in him, that never is dead. Most men have a deadness in them, that frightens me so because of my own deadness. Why can't men get their life straight, like St. Mawr, and then think? Why can't they think quick, mother: quick as a woman: only farther than we do? Why isn't men's thinking quick like fire, mother? Why is it so slow, so dead, so deadly dull?" '

The kind of intelligence, 'burning like a flame fed straight from underneath', that Lou postulates—the intelligence of a full thinking man who, more than merely intuitive, can sit the stallion as Lewis

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does—doesn't prove its possibility by being presented in any character: Lou, at the close, has little hope of meeting the man she would care to mate with. But it *is*, nevertheless, irresistibly present in *St. Mawr* the dramatic poem; it is no mere abstract postulate. It is present as the marvellous creative intelligence of the author.

For creative genius (and can it ever be other than intelligent?) manifests itself as supreme intelligence in Lawrence—even though writers in the intellectual weeklies and the Sunday papers can still compare him to Carlyle, and we still find the attitude persisting that, while conceding 'genius' to Lawrence (a kind of genius not very interesting to intellectuals, one gathers), used to send one for intelligence to Aldous Huxley. What is it but intelligence that we have in that deep insight into human nature; that clairvoyant understanding of so wide a range of types and of social milieux; that generalizing power which never leaves the concrete—the power of exposing the movement of civilization in the malady of the individual psyche? It is the same intelligence as that which functions, unmistakably as *that*, one would have thought (but is Lawrence known as a great critic?) in *Phoenix*, the volume of literary criticism, and (for all the lapses) in *Studies in Classic American Literature*.

Formidably critical though it may be, it is the expression of triumphant creativity, and the associate of reverence and wonder. In the conversation with her mother quoted from above, Lou exclaims:

> ' "Ah no, mother, I want the wonder back again, or I shall die. I don't want to be like you, just criticizing and annihilating these dreary people and enjoying it".'

Lawrence can make 'wonder', as an answer to the potent actuality of Mrs. Witt, seem so much more than a vaguely recoiling romanticism because for him it is so much more. He can affirm with a power not given to poor Lou, who is not a genius, and there is nothing of the merely postulated about the positives that he affirms.

The power of the affirmation lies, not in any insistence or assertion or argument, but in the creative fact, his art; it is that which bears irrefutable witness. What his art *does* is beyond argument or doubt. It is not a question of metaphysics or theology—though no doubt there are questions presented for the metaphysician and the theologian. Great art, something created and *there*, is what Lawrence gives us. And there we undeniably *have* a world of wonder and reverence, where life wells up from mysterious springs. It is no merely imagined world; what the creative imagination of the artist makes us contemplate bears an unanswerable testimony.

The witness, the affirmation, is there in the very presentment of this 'cardboard world', so desolating to Lou Carrington, of 'personality' and petty will and 'lots of fun', the world of mechanical repetition: the disgust, the exposure and the rejection are

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utterly different from what one finds in Aldous Huxley: one can never be unaware of the affirmation, the positive, that gives them their force. The sardonic comedy of Mrs. Witt, for instance, turns into something poignant. As the destructive negation, the spirit of rejection and disgust, she 'places' herself.

After the scene, the fiasco, with St. Mawr in Rotten Row—provoked by Mrs. Witt, he misbehaves—they all go down to spend the summer on the Welsh border:

> 'So down went Lou and Rico, Lewis, Poppy and St. Mawr, to Shrewsbury, then out into the country. Mrs. Witt's "cottage" was a tall red-brick Georgian house looking straight on to the churchyard, and the dark, looming big Church.
>
> ' "I never knew what a comfort it would be", said Mrs. Witt, "to have grave-stones under my drawing-room, and funerals for lunch".
>
> 'She really did take a strange pleasure in sitting in her panelled room, that was painted grey, and watching the Dean or one of the curates officiating at the graveside, among a group of black country mourners, with black-bordered handkerchiefs luxuriantly in use.
>
> ' "Mother!", said Lou, "I think it's gruesome!" '

Mrs. Witt's note is not so merely light as it sounds. The churchyard, with its funerals, becomes an insistent theme. It isn't, for Mrs. Witt, an obsession with death as the terrifying and inescapable reality, but a fear that death will prove unreal. Reported in this way, the case may not seem to promise much in the way of convincing poignancy. But this is what we are actually given; the thing is *done*, in its inevitability an astonishing triumph of genius; and since the success—the convincing transmutation, in Mrs. Witt, of hard-boiled ironic destructiveness into agonized despair—is crucial to the success of the whole, a long quotation may be in place:

> 'In the morning she found her mother sitting at a window watching a funeral. It was raining heavily, so that some of the mourners even wore mackintosh coats. The funeral was in the poorer corner of the churchyard, where another new grave was covered with wreaths of sodden, shrivelling flowers. The yellowish coffin stood on the wet earth, in the rain; the curate held his hat, in a sort of permanent salute, above his head, like a little umbrella, as he hastened on with the service. The people seemed too wet to weep more wet.
>
> 'It was a long coffin
>
> ' "Mother, do you really *like* watching?" asked Lou irritably, as Mrs. Witt sat in complete absorption.
>
> ' "I do, Louise, I really enjoy it".
>
> ' "Enjoy, mother!" Lou was almost disgusted.
>
> ' "I'll tell you why. I imagine I'm the one in the coffin—this is a girl of eighteen, who died of consumption—and those are my relatives, and I'm watching them put me away. And you know,

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Louise, I've come to the conclusion that hardly anybody in the world really lives, and so hardly anybody really dies. They may well say *Oh Death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling?* Even Death can't sting those that have never really lived. I always used to want that—to die without death stinging me. And I'm sure the girl in the coffin is saying to herself: *Fancy Aunt Emma putting on a drab slicker, and wearing it while they bury me. Doesn't show much respect. But then my mother's family always were common!* I feel there should be a solemn burial of a roll of newspapers containing the account of the death and funeral, next week. It would be just as serious: the grave of all the world's remarks—''

' ''I don't want to think about it, mother. One ought to be able to laugh at it. I want to laugh at it''.

' ''Well, Louise, I think it's just as great a mistake to laugh at everything as to cry at everything. Laughter's not the one panacea, either. I should *really* like, before I do come to be buried in a box, to know where I am. That young girl in that coffin never was anywhere—any more than the newspaper remarks on her death and burial. And I begin to wonder if I've ever been anywhere. I seem to have been a daily sequence of newspaper remarks, myself. I'm sure I never really conceived you and gave you birth. It all happened in newspaper notices. It's a newspaper fact that you are my child, and that's about all there is to it''.

'Lou smiled as she listened.

' ''I always knew you were philosophic, mother. But I never dreamed it would come to elegies in a country churchyard, written to your motherhood''.

' ''*Exactly*, Louise! Here I sit and sing the elegy to my own motherhood. I never had any motherhood, except in newspaper fact. I never was a wife, except in newspaper notices. I never was a young girl, except in newspaper remarks. Bury everything I ever said or that was said about me, and you've buried *me*. But since Kind Words Can Never Die, I can't be buried, and death has no sting-a-ling-a-ling for me! Now listen to me, Louise: I want death to be real to me—not as it was to that young girl. I *want* it to hurt me, Louise. If it hurts me enough, I shall know I was alive''.'

These exchanges, intimately *tête-à-tête*, between Lou and her mother are marvellous in their range and suppleness, their harmonic richness, and the sureness of their inflexion, which, since the surface, belonging to the conversational everyday world, is always kept in touch with the depths, can blend in one utterance the hard-boiled sardonic with the poignant. It is astonishing what Lawrence can do, in dialogue, with complete convincingness; dialogue that starts from, and, when it likes, lapses back into, slangy colloquialism, yet, invoking the essential resources of poetic expression, can hazard the most intense emotional and imaginative heightening. One would have said that the kind of thing hadn't been done, and couldn't be

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done, outside Shakespearean dramatic poetry—which has the advantage of the formal, and explicitly poetic, verse mode.

The note of comedy—sardonic comedy—is always within call. It prevails, magnificently, in the scene that immediately precedes the *tête-à-tête* just quoted from; the scene presenting the consequences of the stallion's crowning misbehaviour. During a riding-party over the moors, St. Mawr 'makes a break'; he rears, and is pulled over backwards by Rico, whom he lames. He also kicks another young man in the face, and spoils his beauty. Local society—County—represented by Dean and Mrs. Vyner, and the Manbys of Corrabach Hall, are determined now, quite resolutely, that this vicious and dangerous horse shall be 'put away'.

Well, St. Mawr *is* a vicious and dangerous horse: he had killed two men, 'accidentally', before Lou bought him for Rico. What we have to note is the way in which he is made for us something more than, something decidedly other than, a vicious horse. It's largely the way in which we see him through Lou's eyes, so that he is invested for us with the significance he has for her. We are really made to feel—and it is an extraordinary creative triumph of the poet—that he represents deep forces of life that are thwarted in the modern world; to feel, on the plane of the outward drama, that he has been provoked and outraged by his human master, so that his 'break' isn't mere viciousness, but a protest of life.

This effect, by which we are made to take our stand with the horse, is also largely got by the way in which the insistence on his being destroyed is brought home to us as both spiteful and mean—as a spiteful, mean and deadly hatred of the really (as opposed to the mechanically and repetitively) living; or, what amounts to the same thing, a determination to eliminate every element of danger from life. And *this* effect is got by what might seem to fall within the ordinary conception of the novelist's art. (For Lawrence is a consummate *novelist*.) It is got in a subtle and vivid rendering of personality, dramatically evoked in a lively comedy.

It is during this journey that Mrs. Witt makes a proposal of marriage to Lewis. The journey forms a kind of enchanted interlude; but the convincingness of the episode is not a matter of mere enchantment. We are made to realize at the setting-out that Mrs Witt has with her another travelling-companion, a terrible despair, the graveyard mood become extreme: the odd circumstances leave her, but for Lewis, alone with this, in the prolonged lull after her latest triumph of 'annihilating dreary people'. The interlude is one for inescapable meditation:

> 'Almost she was tempted in her heart to cry: "Conquer me, oh God, before I die!"—But then she had a terrible contempt for the God that was supposed to rule this universe. She felt she could make *Him* kiss her hand. Here she was a woman of fifty-one, past the change of life. And her great dread was to die an empty, barren death. Oh, if only Death might open dark wings of mystery and consolation. To die an easy, barren death. To

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pass out as she had passed in, without mystery or the rustling of darkness! That was her last, final, ashy dread.

'"Old" she said to herself. "I am not *old*! I have lived many years, that is all. But I am as timeless as an hour-glass that turns morning and night, and spills the hours of sleep one way, the hours of consciousness the other way, without itself being affected. Nothing in all my life has ever truly affected me.—I believe Cleopatra only tried the asp, as she tried her pearls in wine, to see if it would really, really have any effect on her. Nothing had ever really had any effect on her, neither Cæsar nor Antony nor any of them. Never once had she really been lost, lost to herself. Then try death, see if that trick would work. If she would lose herself to herself that way.—Ah, death!"

'But Mrs. Witt mistrusted death too. She felt she might pass out as a bed of asters passes out in autumn, to mere nothingness.—And something in her longed to die, at least, *positively*.'

Out of this distress she contemplates Lewis, who may have 'no mind', and be 'strictly a nonentity', but who yet ('what made him perhaps the only real entity to her') seems 'to inhabit another world from hers'. It emphasizes the irony of the situation that the groom, in a moment of confidential unselfconsciousness, breaks out into a long fantasia of folk-beliefs ('A man's mind has to be full of something, so I keep to what we used to think as lads'). It is immediately on this that the admirer of 'mind' and of 'clever men' makes her proposal—to be coldly rejected.

The novelist who can bring off this strange country interlude with complete success can then give us (Mrs. Witt having arrived at her destination) the comedy of Lou's letters from Shropshire, which describes with a perfectly got feminine edge and vivacity the convalescent Rico's flirtations with Flora Manby, his devoted nurse.

The 'drama' in the ordinary sense is now virtually over. For if *St. Mawr* deserves to be called a dramatic poem, it is not because it comes to what would ordinarily be called a dramatic close. The burden that represents its essential inspiration demands something quite other. And the actual close seems to me as consummately right, and as clear a proof of genius, as anything else about the work.

Taking a kind of indefinite leave of Rico, Lou decides to go back with her mother to America: Mrs. Witt can't stand England, and Lou can't stand the bright young people. I have remarked already on the way in which the little drama of three main actors, a horse and two grooms, is given an inclusive effect and a representative significance. We seem to have presented to us the case of modern civilization in general. The journey back to Texas and then up into the mountains illustrates some of the workings of this generalizing process.

They are at sea:

'By mid-afternoon it was blue summer, on the blue, running waters of the Channel. And soon, the ship steering for Santander,

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there was the coast of France, the rocks twinkling like some magic world.

'The magic world! And back of it, that post-war Paris, which Lou knew only too well, and which depressed her so thoroughly. Or that post-war Monte Carlo, the Riviera still more depressing even than Paris. No, no one must land, even on magic coasts. Else you found yourself in a railway station and a "centre of civilization" in five minutes'.

They arrive at Havana, and find 'the green leaf of American prosperity shedding itself recklessly, from every roaming sprig of a tourist, over this city of sunshine and alcohol'. As for Texas:

'It left Lou blank with wonder. And in the face of this strange cheerful living in the mirror—a rather cheap mirror at that—England began to seem real to her again.

'Then she had to remember herself back in England. And no, oh God, England was not real either, except poisonously.

'What was real? What under heaven was real?'

Out of this they flee north to Santa Fé, and then into the mountain country, the scale and beauty of which are marvellously evoked. The wild, overwhelming, inhuman beauty has its place in the total significance. There's an obvious contrast with the squalor, meanness and pettiness of human life. But that's not all; it's not so simple as that. There's no defeatism in Lawrence, and no resting in any opposition of loathsome men to beautiful nature. He is very unlike Mrs. Witt in his radical attitudes: all his negatives and his critical valuations have their significance in relation to a positive—and that is not of the order of 'Back to Nature'. The total effect of *St. Mawr* (as of any characteristic work of Lawrence's) is an affirmation—if that is not a misleading word; for it is the 'tale' we think of as affirming, not the 'artist'. ('Never trust the artist; trust the tale'). There is nothing willed about it.

It's partly a matter of the way in which the nullities and the negative in the drama—Rico and his friends on the one hand, and Mrs. Witt on the other—are placed: the positive is powerfully present by implication. And it's there in the extraordinary vitality everywhere of Lawrence's art. The intensity is not an intensity of repulsion and rejection; it is patently and essentially creative, a marvellous and triumphant expression of the creative force of life, in its very nature an affirmation.

And take the concluding pages of *St. Mawr*, superficially so inconsequent and tailing-off, essentially so germane, so *belonging* to the significance. The stallion himself and Lewis have been left behind in Texas, and we hear no more of them. Lou buys a ranch, high up in the mountains, in a miraculously beautiful place with a vast outlook over the desert below. The ranch has a history, which is given us in vivid epitome—a history of defeat. But 'defeat' is not the word on which the emphasis rests—the emphasis as conveyed by Lawrence's art. The series of pioneering efforts are evoked

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with poignant sympathy. You're not at all inclined to any smile of superiority when the little New England wife of the pioneer finally has the mountain water flowing through the bright taps in her kitchen in the log-built farmhouse. You feel it as a real triumph; the triumph of civilization is a triumph of the spirit, though upon exhausting effort and ultimate fatigue defeat ensues, and then decay. On this, Lou supervenes, to make a fresh start. And here is the comment:

> 'Every new stroke of civilization has cost the lives of countless brave men, who have fallen defeated by the "dragon", in their effort to win the apples of the Hesperides, or the fleece of gold. Fallen in their efforts to overcome the old, half-sordid savagery of the lower stages of creation, and win to the next stage.
>
> 'For all savagery is half-sordid. And man is only himself when he is fighting on and on, to overcome the sordiness.
>
> 'And every civilization, when it loses its inward vision and its cleaner energy, falls into a new sort of sordidness, more vast and more stupendous than the old savage sort. An Augean stables of metallic filth.
>
> 'And all the time, man has to rouse himself afresh, to cleanse the new accumulation of refuse. To win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start, and to cleanse behind him the century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse: even of tin cans'.

Lawrence can allow himself this because the affirmation merely brings to explicitness what his art has affirmed pervasively and cumulatively. And, with his easy sureness of poise, he can allow the ironical Mrs. Witt the closing note.

F. R. LEAVIS.

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITORS OF *Scrutiny*.

Dear Sirs,

Marius Bewley's essay on 'James's Debt to Hawthorne (I)' in the September, 1949, *Scrutiny* strikes me as vulnerable in a number of respects. Intent upon drawing parallels between *The Blithedale Romance* and *The Bostonians*, Mr. Bewley finds himself confronted by the testimony of the *Notebooks* to a more immediate influence—Alphonse Daudet's *L'Évangeliste*. 'At the outset', Mr. Bewley writes, 'James has placed a distraction in the way. . . . But such a notice as this serves only as a distraction; it presents no real difficulty, for if Daudet's Madame Autheman helped to focus the question, it had been Hawthorne, years before, who had provided

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the answer before the question had been asked. In his *Life of* [*sic*] *Hawthorne* (1879) James had already noted that answer, and if he now preferred giving credit to Daudet it is probable that his sensibility had simply 'moved on' to such an extent that he failed to note the rate at which he was taking hints from the Hawthorne novel he had known for so many years'.

If I follow Mr. Bewley's reasoning correctly, he discards the 'hard' fact of James's notation of the Daudet source (a 'distraction') for the 'it is probable' thesis that James's sensibility had 'moved on' but was taking 'hints from the Hawthorne work'. This is, to say the least, a candid substitution of the speculative for the concrete —a delightful road to critical freedom; one can exercise one's critical fantasy without any embarrassing matters of substance; it is Procrustes in the library. But if we accept Mr. Bewley's suggestion and travel backward along the path or paths over which Henry James's sensibility 'moved on' are we justified in stopping at Hawthorne? Could we not go behind? could we not go back further? Mr. Bewley is, of course, pre-occupied with James's debt to Hawthorne: but this debt must be measured by other yardsticks than that of speculative parallels between one Hawthorne novel and one Jamesian novel. *The Bostonians* is drawn from personal experience first—James's intimate knowledge of Boston, his familiarity with the cults and fads and reform movements in that city, his memory of the abolition movement at its height, his friendship with the men of Concord and his own memories of Brook Farm anecdotes told in the James household and among his father's friends: in other words the material Hawthorne drew upon belonged also to James's 'visitable past'.

> 'The compiler of these pages [he tells us in his *Hawthorne* precisely in his discussion of *The Blithedale Romance*] though his recollections date only from a later period, has a memory of a certain number of persons who had been intimately connected, as Hawthorne was not, with the agitations of that interesting time. Something of its interest adhered to them still—something of its aroma clung to their garments; there was something about them which seemed to say that when they were young and enthusiastic, they had been initiated into moral mysteries, they had a wonderful game . . .'

and he goes on to talk of Emerson and of Brook Farm.

Here are sources deeper than any one book. An objective view of *The Bostonians* must also comprehend the combined effect of James's return to America in 1881 after an absence of six years and his re-reading of *L'Évangeliste*. In Boston he reads the Carlyle-Emerson correspondence, which he reviews; it takes him back to a recent past. He wants to 'show that I *can* write an American story', and in this the 'distraction' suddenly becomes important. For if Mr. Bewley prescribes a retracing of the paths of James's sensibility, it is Daudet who furnishes the real clue and shows us the direction: and this leads us not to Hawthorne but to Calvin. The household of

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William James of Albany was a Calvinistic household; and Calvin haunted the life of Henry Senior until Swedenborg could replace him. Moreover, Henry Junior was exposed to the historical side of Calvinism during his schooling in Geneva. (If Winterbourne in the revised version of *Daisy Miller* 'had an old attachment for the little capital of Calvin' it can be demonstrated that this was an attachment Winterbourne's creator shared.)

See then where Calvin—rather than Hawthorne—can lead us: (' . . . if Daudet's Mme. Autheman helped to focus the question', Mr. Bewley says, 'it had been Hawthorne years before who provided the answer'.) But James described Madame Autheman as a 'Medusa of Calvinism'. And he explained that Daudet 'has not . . . a general understanding of the religious passion . . . that province of the mind cannot be *fait du chic*—experience, there, is the only explorer'. That experience Henry James had had in the daily life of his father, and his Swedenborgian passion. *L'Évangeliste* and its Calvinism (not to speak of its resemblances to *The Bostonians*) touched a deeply personal chord in Henry James.

We can pursue this path still further—and now in the direction of Hawthorne and Brook Farm. Henry James Senior was not only a Swedenborgian but a Fourierist and his novelist son was likewise deeply interested in the movement. Brook Farm was for a time Fourierist and any discussion of the 'situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf' as James put it in his note for *The Bostonians* would, in the novelist's mind, refer back to Henry Senior's many writings on marriage and divorce and on the rôle of women in the Fourierist phalanx—a much-debated question of the time. (The Senior James as a matter of fact translated Hennequin's *Les amours au Phalanstère* and showed a broadness of view toward the sexual question never shared by his son.)

It can be seen from the foregoing that 'influence' in Henry James must always be studied 'in depth', and that what Mr. Bewley describes as a 'distraction' is clearly only a distraction to Mr. Bewley.

As a footnote to this I should like to comment on a footnote of Mr. Bewley's in this article concerning Walt Whitman. He says that 'the evidence that James revised his taste [for Whitman] later in life is far from convincing' and he thus refuses to accept Edith Wharton's account of James's admiration for the poet. Has Mr. Bewley really looked at the evidence? The affectionate allusions to 'the good Walt' and the 'dear old Walt' in *Notes of a Son and Brother* and the review of the letters to Doyle in 1898 suffice to give complete credence to Mrs. Wharton's reminiscence.

Yours sincerely,

LEON EDEL.

309 East 23 Street,
New York 10, New York.

25th January, 1950.

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To THE EDITORS OF *Scrutiny*.

Dear Sirs,

Mr. Leon Edel (who has edited *The Other House* in the Rupert Hart-Davis series of Jamesian reprints—a series to which Mr. David Garnett's anthology of James's stories, adversely referred to in my own article, also belongs) seems to know a good deal more about Henry James's state of mind and knowledge when he wrote *The Bostonians* than James knew himself. James wrote to his brother concerning *The Bostonians* in these words: 'The whole thing is too long and dawdling. This came from the fact (partly) that I had the sense of knowing terribly little about the kind of life I had attempted to describe—and felt a constant pressure to make the picture substantial by thinking it out—pencilling and "shading". I was afraid of the reproach (having *seen* so little of the whole business treated of), of being superficial and cheap—and in short I should have been much more rapid, and had a lighter hand, with a subject concerned with people and things of a nature more near to my experience'. I don't agree with James's remarks on his novel here, but for the rest, I prefer James's word to Mr. Edel's.

I had not meant in my essay to insist on Hawthorne's value as a Baedeker to Henry James, although at one level the problem inevitably presented itself as that; but since it is at the Baedeker level that Mr. Edel wishes to focus the discussion, I may say that I think *Blithedale,* a novel that James had known for years, was beautifully calculated to give James the kind of reassurances he was looking for. *L'Évangeliste* was not. Mr. Edel maintains that in saying James was much influenced by *Blithedale* I have substituted the speculative for the concrete—the concrete in this case being James's notation of his obligation to Daudet. It happens that I presented fourteen *Scrutiny* pages of highly concrete analysis and comparison that, as far as I can make out from his letter, Mr. Edel hasn't deigned to look at. Apparently any further evidence in the case is rejected *a priori* on the basis of James's notation. Nevertheless, whether convincing to Mr. Edel or not, I should hardly have called my analysis either speculative or abstract. It is there with all its evidence in the concrete if Mr. Edel wishes to disprove it.

Mr. Edel says that 'the material Hawthorne drew upon belonged also to James's 'visitable' past'. I am happy to know that he agrees with me, for that was one of the points I insisted on. I shall not transcribe any sentences of mine to make that clear to Mr. Edel. I trust the September *Scrutiny* is still accessible to him.

In the first half of Mr. Edel's letter, he would interpret my position on this matter (if he understood it) unfavourably. Since Hawthorne and James shared a common background on which both the novels draw, this would, in his eyes, militate against the Hawthorne influence. But in the second half of his letter he professes to see in Daudet's and James's common interest in Calvinism a persuasive reason for believing that James had been much influenced by *L'Evangeliste*. This 'touched a deeply personal

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chord in Henry James'. The principle of common property is thus seen to be working in opposing directions for Mr. Edel, but always in his favour, and never in mine. This strikes me as being greedy.

Mr. Edel says, as if we had arrived somewhere: 'See then where Calvin—rather than Hawthorne—can lead us'. But it looks very much like Nowhere to me. I fail to see the relevance of Calvin in the present context at all. The only critic I know who has touched on this aspect of James is Mr. Yvor Winters in his excellent study in *Maule's Curse,* and the effects of Calvinism on James's art are there shown to be of a highly attenuated and indirect (if decisive) character. I am even more puzzled by Mr. Edel's gratuitous reference to Swedenborg. I don't know what he is doing here unless it is for the purpose of giving 'depth' to the discussion. Mr. Quentin Anderson has shown what a significant influence Swedenborg, by way of Henry James Senior's writings, had on the novelist's art—but again, what is the point of dragging Swedenborg in here? I seem barely to make out (I'm not sure because Mr. Edel's argument grows strategically muddy here) that young Henry James, having seen his father in a 'Swedenborgian passion', knew what that sort of thing could mean, and so when he encountered Calvinism in *L'Évangeliste* (more or less equating—again through personal experience—its intensities with Swedenborgianism) his imagination was set off—in part by Daudet's failure to deal with the theme adequately. And this—if I read Mr. Edel correctly—made young Henry James eager to write about a person consumed by an idea or passion, and show how that passion can involve the lives of others. This resulted in *The Bostonians.* And I presume that Mr. Edel makes this remark to counter my own that *Blithedale's* failure as a satire on Boston in James's eyes was one of the things that stimulated his own imagination in writing *The Bostonians.* I hope that Mr. Edel won't think I'm only being perverse if I fail to see an analogy between the two cases. My 'critical fantasy' isn't up to Mr. Edel's high flights of speculation.

But if we are going to allow Calvin to take us by the hand, he can lead us back to Hawthorne and *Blithedale* as easily as to Daudet and *L'Évangeliste.* Calvinism frequently doesn't go by that name in Hawthorne, but what is *Blithedale* but the study of a society that has been ravaged by Calvinism? And New England Calvinism at that. On the grounds of Calvinism, *Blithedale,* we might say, was capable of touching 'a deeply personal chord in Henry James'. And we are back where we started from.

As for the fifth paragraph in Mr. Edel's letter: Mr. Edel has devoted a good many years to the study of Henry James, and he knows a great deal about the 'facts'—especially the 'hard' ones. But does he really suppose that the data he adduces in this paragraph is uncommon knowledge, or that one is unjustified in assuming it rather than in insisting on it? The point I was making in my essay was, not that Hawthorne had revealed to James for the first time the facts of New England life, but that he was the first to have shown him those facts used *in art* with any effectiveness. James himself is perfectly clear on this point. Writing of Hawthorne's

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death, he said that Hawthorne had shown 'to what a use American matter could be put by an American hand: a consummation involving, it appeared, the happiest moral. For the moral was that an American could be an artist, one of the finest, without going "outside" about it, as I liked to say; quite, in fact, as if Hawthorne had become one just by being American *enough*, by the felicity of how the artist in him missed nothing, suspected nothing, that the ambient air didn't affect him as containing'. The crux of the matter is that Mr. Edel has failed to make an elementary distinction that I should have thought would have been of first importance in any critical discussion. He ignores the difference between the nature of an artistic influence and the impressions that extra-literary phenomena may make. This explains why it is so easy for Daudet to merge into Calvin, Calvin into Swedenborg, Swedenborg into Fourier, and Fourier into the Henry James of *The Bostonians* in Mr. Edel's brief letter. Nothing is sharply enough focussed, no essential differences are sensitively enough preserved, to prevent everybody from flowing into everybody else. Only poor Hawthorne seems to be excluded from the mystic circle.

Before turning to Mr. Edel's remarks on James's opinion of Whitman, I should like to say that his conclusion that I was evaluating James's debt to Hawthorne on the basis of one novel by either writer seems indelicately precipitate to me. I perhaps lack Mr. Edel's ability of compressing many names into a small compass, but I should have thought it clear that the essay in question was the first in a series—a recognition which should at least have postponed his taunt.

As for Mr. Edel's final paragraph, I am not surprised that he is eager to discount the 1868 review of Whitman. Hawthorne and Whitman have a way of always being on different sides of the fence. First of all, I wasn't doubting Mrs. Wharton's word about that evening in her drawing room in 1905 when James read Whitman aloud. But I do doubt the fine accuracy of her interpretation. I would call Mr. Edel's attention to the fact that the question is whether James's essential evaluation of Whitman's *poetry* changed in later life or not. There is no doubt that James grew more mellow in his personal feelings for Whitman as a man. In 1868 James wrote a brilliant, closely reasoned, incisive, but unamiable review of Whitman's poetry, and that review stands as chief exhibit in the collective evidence of what James thought of Whitman as a poet. Mrs. Wharton says that she discussed Whitman's genius with James, which he seemed to grant. But the only thing we know about that conversation is that suddenly he threw up his hands and cried: 'Oh, yes, a great genius; undoubtedly a very great genius! Only one cannot help deploring his too-extensive acquaintance with the foreign languages'. Mrs. Wharton took this as humorous geniality, which no doubt it was (her entire description of James's incantatory reading of Whitman's poetry on that occasion sounds humorous to me), but it should not be forgotten that James was simply restating here one of the principal arguments from his 1868 review, in which he had said: 'But if Mr. Whitman does not write

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verse, he does not write ordinary prose. The reader has seen that liberty is "libertad." In like manner comrade is "camerado"; Americans are "Americanos"; a pavement is a "trottoir", and Mr. Whitman himself is a "chansonnier".' These observations on Whitman's foreign vocabulary move directly into the centre of the case against him in this review, and James's remark at Mrs. Wharton's, however genially thrown off, doesn't indicate to me that he had sacrificed his point. And if I may say so, James's allusions to 'the good Walt' and the 'dear old Walt' seem to me to denote a patronizing attitude that would hardly suggest any radical revaluation of his estimation of the poetry. I can't imagine James referring to Shakespeare as 'dear old Will', or even to Browning (since we are speaking of a robust poet) as 'the good Bob'. The 1898 review is a different matter, and it leaves no doubt that James had certainly lost his animus against Whitman as he aged, and that he now felt a very kindly (but in spite of himself, condescending) interest in him. But as a piece of critical prose it is emotive, imprecise, and filled with a great deal of deliberate double-talk that reads rather curiously when compared, in significant phrasings, with the earlier review. In any case, the 1898 review is not about the verse, although James does say there that a 'few' of Whitman's pages of verse manage to stand, by 'luck', in some sort of relation to poetry. This is the most that can be adduced against my statement that 'the evidence that James revised his taste later in life is far from convincing'. The evidence may convince one that James had lost interest in the question altogether, but that he had moved over to the conventional estimation is absurd.

Mr. Edel's refusal to recognize the mountain of evidence that supports Hawthorne's demonstrable influence in the works of Henry James balances in a very curious way with his habit of looking through a magnifying lens at such filaments of 'evidence' as can be scraped up on Whitman's behalf. Mr. Edel has apparently used the same glass through which to read *L'Évangeliste*. He speaks of its 'resemblances' to *The Bostonians*, but without James's specific reference to Daudet's novel I doubt if Mr. Edel would have been aware of them. James's reference is exactly what I said it was: a distraction that deflects attention from the artistically relevant influence. My own guileless use of the adjective 'probable', on the back of which Mr. Edel has leaped with such blood-curdling sneers, stated a conjecture as to *why* James should have been so conscious of *L'Évangeliste*. It did *not* form the hallucinatory introduction to an 'it is probable' thesis on the question of *Blithedale's* influence. The influence of *Blithedale* on *The Bostonians* is clearly demonstrable if one admits the usual laws of evidence; there is nothing merely 'probable' about it. Inasmuch as it did not seem worthwhile examining *L'Évangeliste* in my article (what, after all, does it offer for relevant comparison in the present argument?) there seems no point in doing so here; but the reader may investigate for himself how little the French novel had to give James in comparison with all he took from *Blithedale*, which, by the way, is a far finer novel than *L'Évangeliste*.

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If Mr. Edel's letter has any point beyond that of drawing up his erudition in martial array against my own unbellicose thesis, I suppose it exists in a championship of the French influence on James. In this he supports the opinion of his colleague, Mr. David Garnett. The introduction to Mr. Garnett's anthology of James's stories seems to have been strongly influenced by Ford Madox Hueffer's *Henry James: A Critical Study,* 1913. Hueffer's book deserves respect from the fact that it outspokenly recognized James's genius when James was still alive to appreciate it, and at a time when H. G. Wells felt free to mock James's art with gutter-snipe impudence. Nevertheless, from any critical point of view, Hueffer's is a very bad book. I believe it is one of the first studies to insist on the French influence, and its statement is still representative of what one must expect along those lines. For example, Hueffer calls James's early work published in American periodicals, including *Roderick Hudson,* 'prehistoric papers', a remark that squares perfectly with the opinions expressed (but on the whole, less amiably) in Mr. Garnett's introduction. Hueffer then continues: 'The fact is that *Roderick Hudson* gives so very completely the measure of the "earliest James". For our author was never a very exclusive artist in words—an artist, that is to say, in the sense that Flaubert and M. Anatole France are artists. Neither until after—until long after—he had written *Roderick Hudson* did our author become a master of plot, story and motive . . . ' In comparison with 'prentice work' like *Roderick Hudson,* Hueffer points to *A Passionate Pilgrim* as 'the first masterpiece'! What the French influence seems to add up to for Hueffer is simply that James, in spite of his apparent reticence, was really very interested in the seamy side of life: 'Yes, Mr. James was in the same boat with Flaubert, with Zola, with Turgenieff, with Maupassant, even with Baudelaire'. And Hueffer doesn't let the occasion slip to exercise his sarcasm at the idea that George Eliot might have been useful to James's art.

Now it is from nonsense like that that a study of Hawthorne's influence on James delivers us. It helps to define those essential problems that lie at the basis of James's art. It helps one in making more precise value discriminations, and in understanding *significantly* why James's art sometimes failed. It reveals a good deal about his technical preoccupations, and it helps to relate him to the American tradition in which he must take his place at last. I doubt if Mr. Edel can honestly make similar claims for Daudet. But then, of course, for Mr. Edel, these questions do not represent 'matters of substance', at least inasfar as they can be focussed in Hawthorne's humble influence. Hawthorne, Mr. Edel would say, paddles in the shallows while he, with Daudet and some other Frenchmen, fashionably sports 'in depth'. And I would agree that if Mr. Edel's letter is a measure of the desirable 'depth', it is deep enough to be over the head of any critical relevance.

Sincerely yours,

MARIUS BEWLEY.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

SIN AND SODA

THE COCKTAIL PARTY, A COMEDY, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 10/6).

Though the play seems very much closer to *Sejanus* than to *Every Man In His Humour* one cannot feel that it was strange of Jonson to call *Volpone* a comedy. Some such description was usual on the title-pages of his times and of the two chief he chose the least misleading. But when Mr. Eliot calls his new play a comedy he seems to me to be closer to the position of a Shakespeare calling *Macbeth* a comedy on the strength of the Porter Scene. Only the incidentals in the play are, in fact, comic and, though on the stage they should be much more effective, on paper they barely deserve the adjective. I suppose that the more perspicacious readers will think of Dante and accept the description in the very limited sense in which it seems intended; the rest are likely, however, to yield to the general chorus of the dramatic critics, to accept the play as 'witty' and 'delightful', and to get little further into it than the title might seem to tempt them to get. If they find it unsatisfactory it will be on the grounds that parts of it are dull and not because—what is surely the real criterion for judgment—it is unsuccessful on the terms that it prescribes for itself.

A good deal of the play, and particularly that part of it that relates to Celia Coplestone, is a development of the ideas handled in *The Family Reunion*, and the reader will be well advised to discard any presuppositions which the use of the term 'Comedy' may raise and to treat the play with the same sobriety that he would bring to its predecessor. Like *The Family Reunion* it is an attempt to discuss religious topics in theatrical terms and, again like that play, it essays this discussion by using situations from modern life. Both plays, that is, attempt something much more difficult than is attempted in *Murder In The Cathedral*, where the remote historical setting allows even the sceptical among the audience to concur in the argument without, as it were, feeling themselves too personally or immediately implicated in it. The difficulty in both the later plays is to effect the necessary emotional synthesis between the world of ideas, of belief, in which the topics discussed may be said to exist, and the mundane world of taxis and boiled eggs which is the *milieu* of the characters. This is not to suggest that there is an inveterate hostility between these two worlds, but rather to indicate how comparatively easily a dramatist seeking to fuse them may be betrayed into, on the one hand, bathos and, on the other, seemingly gratuitous lurches towards sublimity. I think that it is significant that the single (fairly long) quotation in *The Cocktail Party* should be a neo-Platonic passage from *Prometheus Unbound*:

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> For know there are two worlds of life and death:
> One that which thou beholdest; but the other
> Is underneath the grave . . .

That we should be given such lines seems to indicate that the playwright is aware of the dichotomy in his material and apprised of the difficulties inherent in his task. We begin, then, by looking at the play to see whether it has improved upon its predecessor in the handling of these difficulties.

Two improvements can be at once perceived. In the first place, because Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly is made a professional consultant his analytical probings, comments and advice are given a more than individual authority, and seem far less queerly oracular than do the rather similar speeches of Agatha in the earlier play. This is so, I think, even when he ceases to speak as a doctor and reveals himself as a 'Guardian', intent upon the health of the soul rather than that of the body. His authority tends to pass over with him from the one rôle to the other, and if we are responding naturally we shall tend not to question it. In the second place the development of Celia Coplestone (we might call her Harry Monchensey in the guise of a young woman) is really only half the play, the other half being concerned with the marital difficulties between Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne. If not the most important part of the play this other half is at least the most prominent and this has the effect, not only of making the martyr seem more exceptional, more of a departure from the average (as she surely should seem), but also of giving a more balanced picture of religious experience than that given in *The Family Reunion*. The Chamberlaynes are shown as following a religious development of their own which, while quite different from it, is yet supplementary to that of Celia. As Reilly says:

> Neither way is better.
> Both ways are necessary. It is also necessary
> To make a choice between them.

The impression is thus quite different from that given by *The Family Reunion*. There we are left with the sense that virtue is somehow the prerogative of a limited class of 'sufferers', an esoteric quality to which more normal persons cannot hope to attain; here on the other hand martyrdom is only one of several varieties of religious experience, and that one of the less common. To an audience composed (let us hope) of non-'sufferers' the latter view is much more likely to recommend itself.

Another difference between the two plays is that there are evidently intended to be no fundamentally bad or trivial characters in *The Cocktail Party*. This may seem so slight a point as hardly to be worth noticing but in fact I think it is crucial. In life, I suppose, we are only aware of virtue negatively, and through knowing the virtuous party for some time. Sobriety is consistent but unaggressive, abstaining from drunkenness, charity from malice or unkindness, humility from arrogance or condescension, and so on.

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As soon as these qualities become too positive or overt, as soon as we have a man who ostentatiously refuses a drink or sententiously refuses to criticize his neighbour, we have, not virtue, but hypocrisy or priggishness. It is by their works that we know the virtuous and not by their professions, and it usually takes time before our knowledge ripens into any sort of assurance. Now where a dramatist means to present a virtuous character he has obviously to work in firmer and more immediate stuff than this and it is understandable that he usually employs his own sort of negative approach, by playing the character off against a number of others who are palpably less virtuous. At times, indeed, as in some of the Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, he is content to work almost entirely in negative terms—that is, through a cast of villains—and to allow his moral positives to present themselves merely as implications or inferences. Dramatically speaking, either of these approaches has obvious advantages over the direct approach, where the good characters have to be positively established *as* good, because they do not involve the characters in description or suggestion of one another's goodness, and so give rise to something more convincing than a dull assortment of eulogies. 'Damn braces, bless relaxes', said Blake: the relevance of this to drama should be self-evident.

In this play Eliot is trying to present virtue directly, without the traditional advantage of a contrast with its opposite, and it seems to me that he is often perilously close to relaxation of the kind I take Blake to have meant. At the end of the play Edward is clearly on the way to regeneration, his relations with Lavinia clearly more unselfish, yet how is this presented? Partly, to be sure, it is a matter of contrast with their previous relationship. But the dramatist does not leave it there. He goes on to give Edward a string of compliments and 'thoughtful' remarks that are as monotonous as they are unconvincing—'I hope you've not been worrying'. 'It's you who should be tired'. 'I like the dress you're wearing'. 'You have a very practical mind'. 'You lie down now, Lavinia'. Even if this is meant to suggest that Lavinia is pregnant it is surely an unhappy way of drawing attention to domestic harmony. Happiness in marriage would inhere in far less definite particulars—a glance, a touch, a tone of voice. Edward is, in fact, in a position analogous to the ostentatious professor of virtue: he has himself to *show* how virtuous he is, and we accordingly at once suspect that he is only mimicking the real thing. This is not charity but solicitude. Yet how else, granted the chosen approach, could the point be made? Celia is another focus for this sort of weakness, though she is at least removed off-stage when her decision is complete. It is true that Alex's laconic narration of her martydom is effective, true also that the reactions of the other characters are at first simple and convincing enough. But very soon they begin to magnify her image into portentousness so that it cracks and allows her validity as a symbol to drain away:

> I've only been interested in myself:
> And that isn't good enough for Celia.

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Do try to come to see us.
You know, I think it would do us all good—
You and me and Edward . . . to talk about Celia.

I cannot help the feeling
That, in some way, my responsibility
Is greater than that of a band of half-crazed savages.

It seems to me that the unprejudiced reader will find this insistence almost as tiresome as the muscular Christianity of the foreman in *The Rock*, and will react away from rather than towards the values sought to be embodied in the martyr. His recollections of her pleasantly sensitive normality at the opening of the play will hinder him from seeing her in these large and cloudy terms, and he may even feel that she would have merited more sympathetic attention had she remained the woman she at first sight appears. Skilful acting could doubtless conceal some of these weaknesses but the play is not to be called successful because that is so.

It is not only to Celia, however, that this sort of jar, between an initial and a later character, is confined. Julia and Alex, who with Reilly make up the group of 'Guardians', have an even more striking metamorphosis from their initial selves. This is so palpable that it must be intentional, a sort of deliberate convention, and we are no doubt intended to take Edward's remark about 'the guardian' as a clue showing how to accept the convention:

The self that wills—he is a feeble creature;
He has to come to terms in the end
With the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
Who never talks, who cannot argue;
And who in some men may be the *guardian* . . .

In the light of this the Julia and Alex of Acts Two and Three are presumably the inner selves of their analogues in Act One, and not real people at all. Yet the contrast between the selves in each case is almost wantonly exaggerated, and most readers or members of an audience must surely find it impossible to accept. Alex is at first vain ('I'm rather a famous cook') and suspicious ('Ah, so the aunt Really exists') and it would appear that he is also not above drinking half a bottle of Edward's champagne. As for Julia, she is vapid ('Lady Klootz'), avaricious ('Are there any prospects?'), featherbrained (see p. 18) and inquisitive, and vain enough to take umbrage when Reilly sings his song. To transform this figure into a 'Guardian' of such potency that she can condescend ('You must accept your limitations') even to her fellow-Guardian, the perspicacious Reilly, seems to me preposterous. Are we to infer that no matter how stupidly vicious people may be on the surface they can be spotless within? The human Julia's flippant mention of St. Anthony is scarcely sufficient to bridge the yawning void between herself and her *alter ego*, and in fact it is difficult to see how, given two such different quantities, it could be bridged.

Obviously, it will be retorted, Eliot has not tried to bridge it:

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why impugn him for not doing what it was no part of his intention to do? This is easily said but I do not think that in this instance it is a valid defence. The fact is, as I have pointed out, that there is already something of a tension between the two worlds handled in the play, and to make the contrast between the Julia of the real world and the Julia of the spiritual world so gross is only to increase that tension to a point at which the play begins to tear apart. Where the play should be forcing us to see the interdependence of the two worlds, forcing us to admit that the spiritual underlies and informs the actual, we get instead the impression that they are so distinct, so little related, that to move from one to the other is like putting on an impenetrable disguise. What, after all, besides the name, have these Julias in common? Could we identify the one after being acquainted only with the other? That the deliberate convention of 'inner selves' should at first sight give an impression of simple ineptitude is thus not its chief defect. What is serious is that in another way it is itself inept, and draws attention to a material dichotomy which it was part of the business of the dramatist to dissolve or remove. I have not seen the play and I am aware that it might be argued that this contrast, between the earlier and the later Julia, is less serious on the stage. With a book one can turn back to the early pages and make comparisons; but on the stage there is a temporal progression which leaves us dependent on memory and for this reason we may tend to accept the changed figure more readily. The play's popularity may be evidence that the convention works better in the theatre than the study, and I should be happy to believe that it does. On the other hand there may be other reasons for its popularity, reasons more properly the province of the sociologist than of the critic. Even in the study do we, after all, *need* to turn back to the early pages for the contrast to be felt, and felt disturbingly?

These might be called structural criticisms. I should like to conclude by observing that the flaccidity of the verse does little to compensate for them. Some of Celia's speeches to Reilly in Act Two are so inexplicit that one is tempted to call them Eliotese. They seem to rely on certain concepts such as 'love' and 'shame' and 'aloneness' (I use this barbarism because the state is clearly neither loneliness nor solitude) yet they do nothing to make these concepts real. This is at all events what seems to me to be taking place in such a speech as Celia's on p. 123. Again, at other times the verse is so obviously *not* verse that to have printed it as such gives one much the same pause as does the 'Comedy' of the title-page:

> Well, Peter, I'm awfully glad, for your sake,
> Though of course we . . . I shall miss you;
> You know how I depended on you for concerts,
> And picture exhibitions—more than you realized.
> It *was* fun, wasn't it! But now you'll have a chance,
> I hope, to realize your ambitions.
> I shall miss you.

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'Anyone who tries to write poetic drama, even today', Eliot has written, 'should know that half of his energy must be exhausted in the effort to escape from the constricting toils of Shakespeare' This was well said, and it is to his credit that in *The Family Reunion* and, more particularly, *Murder In The Cathedral* Eliot has written dramatic verse that is both verse and underivative. The impression left by *The Cocktail Party,* however, is rather that the 'constricting toils' have been, if that is possible, too thoroughly cast off. It is not that the dramatist here eschews Shakespeareanisms—no sane reader would throw that in his teeth—but that the verse is of so poor a quality as to make them unthinkable. Even a quotation from Shakespeare rather than Shelley would throw up its context in all too harsh a light. One seems to see the shade of William Archer smile ironically.

JOHN PETER.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, by Henry Bamford Parkes (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 15/-).

Probably there is no country that tempts one to broad generalizations more readily than the United States, and at the same time there is no country whose lack of conventional homogeneity is more likely to betray the accuracy of such generalizations. The temptation arises, of course, from a sense of the underlying psychological unity beneath the apparent diversities. In a country in which it is not unknown for third or fourth generation heirs of New York street pedlars to live on artificially aged estates, the amateur popular sociologist (who is a menace in any country, but whose wares constitute a particularly saleable commodity to national magazines like the Luce publications) is more than ever inclined to allow his observations to slash dangerously across all lines of historical accuracy or tact. I remember a much discussed article that appeared in America several years ago purporting to analyse and explain the national character, and which ended by attributing the constitution of the American Congress to an Oedipus complex in the American male. The highly coloured surfaces of the American scene invite that sort of treatment, and it must be confessed that more than other national cultures, that of America does call for analysis and explanation. It is a pattern, as it exists to-day, of the elaborately artificial and the resistantly natural, and in making value-judgments on aspects of the American scene a careful sifting of the elements involved in any given phenomenon is required; for judgments and discriminations that apply in Europe will not always mean the same thing when carried over into the American context.

Before discussing Mr. Parkes's valuable book, I should like to glance, as an illustration of what I have just said, at an article on American education by Miss Margaret Diggle which appeared in the

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September *Scrutiny*. Miss Diggle's article is a note on her experience in teaching English for two years in American universities, and it offers some interesting and striking pictures of collegian illiteracy. I believe few Americans would wish to minimize the 'horrors', or to under-estimate the radical danger they entail. But the problem is not quite such a narrowly educational one as Miss Diggle suggests, for she takes no notice of the fact that the university has a double function in America, and that from the viewpoint of the vast educational 'plants' that are erected across the continent, education is the less important of the two functions. These institutions represent first of all the egalitarian impulse of Americans to share benefits and opportunities equally—and they have discovered in educational institutions one of the last places in their society where a basic political impulse that is deeply rooted in the national character can be at least symbolically satisfied. This may be deplorable as 'higher education', but the viciousness of the practice is minimized when one considers that if the American college student exercises a little intelligence in the selection of his college and instructors, America has provided universities at which he can get as good an education as Oxford or Cambridge provides. Miss Diggle speaks of her attempts to 'supply Americans with "a common core of culture," ' by which she means some Greek myths and Bible stories, but she fails to realize that the political and social motives which are behind the common urgency to have a college education are themselves the indication of 'a common core of culture' more real and vital and traditional than anything Bullfinch or Palgrave is likely to confer.

The real problem that faces the American educator is how to reconcile minority teaching disciplines with democratic principles of education which are themselves, paradoxically, one of the finest expressions of the American tradition. The problem may ultimately be insoluble, but in failing to focus it in its widest context—by Europeanizing it, as it were—Miss Diggle seems to me to have sacrificed some of the value of her observations. She recognizes that 'much American teaching is intended to wean children away from an alien cultural inheritance', but her implication seems to be that this is wholly a bad thing. Nevertheless, there is an almost staggering positive achievement represented by the American schools in their having educated the children of millions of immigrants into Americans. The problems that face American schools to-day may be different problems, but had American education failed in its great task of recreating a transferred population in the likeness of a new national tradition, there would hardly have been any nation in which newer problems might arise.

I have wished to approach Mr. Parkes's *The American People* by this devious way because it seems to me, more than any other book I know, calculated to deepen that perspective in which American problems should be viewed. To view those problems as if they were European is simply to fail to come to terms with their true nature. *The American People* is not a particularly original book; its value lies rather in the sensitivity with which Mr. Parkes

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is able to keep to a central position, invoking a number of different disciplines, but always with a sense of their relevance towards understanding American character in its significant relations with history, art, and economics. Mr. Parkes has peculiar advantages for such a task. As an Englishman who has lived in America for many years he has achieved an essential combination of intimacy with detachment in his dealings with America, while as historian he is able to move through his materials, neither minimizing them nor allowing them to become a burden that might obscure those insights into the structure of the American character—insights more dependent, perhaps, on the certainty and precision with which facts are handled than on the actual massing of materials. Since the progression of his argument (which is an insistence on the agrarian element in American history) is controlled by a critical consciousness that plays over literature and art no less than over historical and sociological data, the conception of the American tradition which emerges is not a sterilely academic one, but a conception which gives scope for the widest play of human aspirations and feelings. From these general remarks it should be clear that Mr. Parkes's book is particularly valuable for the English literary student who may be interested in American literature or manners. Its insights are not only penetrating, they are offered with an agreeable absence of terminological pretensions that frequently betray American writing. Most of all, they are offered with a finely maintained sense of relevance for the contemporary scene. Having charted the growth and development of the American sensibility in relation to the basic patterns of American history, it is possible for Mr. Parkes to repeat commonplaces of sociological observation, giving them a historical genealogy, and therefore a deeper significance, than they usually carry.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of *The American People* that do not leave one wholly satisfied. For example, there is a black-white contrast between Europe and America in the book that, although for the most part kept under reasonable control, one feels might get out of bounds. One occasionally encounters phrasings such as: 'European society was much more corrupt and much more deeply infected with the germs of decay than was the society of the United States . . .' This may or may not be true, according to what one is talking about, or how one defines one's terms, but at any rate if the statement is to be made it deserves—at least the European half of it—fuller development than it ever gets. The admirable conciseness of Mr. Parkes's book may occasionally entail a certain ruthlessness of formulation, but the ruthlessness exacts its price. At one point in his analysis Mr. Parkes remarks very accurately that the Americans are naturally a lawless people. The observation is certainly true (and isn't as unamiable as it may sound), and it is also an important one. I recall that even Edith Wharton is reported once to have said that she always felt like a culprit in the presence of a policeman. But when, in another place, Mr. Parkes says that 'The sense of sin is not an American experience', one wonders if the observa-

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tion is not drawing dangerously close to laxity. It seems to me to be true only within some particular verbal framework which would unduly simplify the 'sense of sin'. And when Mr. Parkes immediately goes on to say that Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter* is not 'presented as undergoing any process of repentance', it seems to me that the simplification has occurred. The adultery of Hester and Dimmesdale easily fades into the background, but the physical act is not the essence of sin, either in America or in Europe.

However, one's chief complaint against Mr. Parkes's dealings with literature would be that he allows himself insufficient space to deal adequately with the questions he raises. It may be for this reason that he seems to accept too easily the current evaluations of Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and some lesser lights. But when he uses phrases like 'Dreiser's massive integrity', or Dreiser's 'brooding sense of pity for the endeavours of the human race', it can hardly be maintained that he isn't diminishing the distinction of a very valuable handbook on America. But this tendency to abbreviate and simplify leads to emphases and professions that are more unfortunate than the easily spotted instances cited above. For example, while it is certainly true that 'It was in the frontier humor of the Mississippi Valley, first oral and afterwards journalistic, that an American style began to develop', Mr. Parkes does not take time to note the sinister implications that this carries for American literature. His chapter, 'The Conquest of the West', presents a colourful glimpse of the westward moving frontier, but it touches the more sordid aspects of the scene with the lightest of hands. The westward expansion that occurred in America during the nineteenth century presented problems that could only be dealt with by the deliberate development of brutality in the American character—a brutality making it easier to slaughter Indians wholesale and preserve law and order in the wilderness. These special traits of characters lingered behind when the frontier had passed on, and were metamorphosed or absorbed by the growing politeness of settled communities, but in their disguised forms they continued to perpetuate a doubtful strain in the American sensibility. This brutality came to be excused, rendered respectable, by developing a special brand of American humour. In this humour the American confirmed his attitudes and responses. If he had felt any uncertainty or guilt before, he could now escape it by laughing loudly and passing for a rough but jolly fellow. This description of Natchez, Mississippi, written about 1840, shows how easily the focus may be shifted, by such means, from the essential moral criticism to one of bullying acceptance:

> 'Natchez is a land of fevers, alligators, and cotton-bales, where to refuse grog before breakfast would degrade you below brute creation, where bears the size of young jackasses are fondled in lieu of pets, and knives the length of barber poles are used for toothpicks, where negro women are knocked down by the auctioneer and knocked up by the purchaser'.

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The insistence on the monstrous and ugly in this passage is camouflaged but not hidden by the rollicking good spirits. This illicit marriage of morbidity and rippling muscle, of horror and hearty laughter, cropped up everywhere. Mr. Parkes rightly points to *Huckleberry Finn* as a great American masterpiece drawing on the colour of frontier speech, but it is also necessary to bear in mind that some very questionable qualities entered American literature along with the colour of the frontier vocabulary, and thereby perpetuated the gaudy symptoms of disease. It is easy enough to see how the boast of the flatboatman in *Huckleberry Finn* relates to the speech manners of the Natchez passage:

> 'I'm the old original iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of Arkinsaw! . . . I'm the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation. Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the smallpox on the mother's side! Look at me! I take nineteen alligators and a barr'l of whiskey for breakfast when I'm in robust health, and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when I'm ailing. . . . Blood's my natural drink, and the wails of the dying is music to my ears'.

Twain's reconstitution of this speech (which is really derived from Davey Crockett's and Mike Fink's famous boasts) is masterly, and an innocent enough piece of local colour in itself, but these attitudes and tones which were to be perpetuated as permanent American fixtures contributed from the Mississippi Valley cannot be accepted merely as the good spirits of a pastoral agrarian society. Mr. Parkes at one point in his book remarks that the Bad Men of the West found their true descendants in the gangsters of American cities in the twentieth century, but the question is more complex than that. The frontier left an even more disastrous heritage in manners and modes of feeling that cover a thinly disguised sadism on which any sociologist of popular culture can expatiate for hours. There is no doubt that American literature could not have existed significantly without these qualities since they formed the fabric of American life itself, but once having become a part of literature they were capable of as much evil as good unless critically and consciously handled. Some of the more cynically sadistic stories of Ambrose Bierce indicate what the tradition on its higher levels could degenerate into—on the lower levels there is no limit.

I doubt if anyone would have much to say in favour of the exponents of the Genteel Tradition—that set of American writers who favoured an unquestioning submission to European criteria of correctness. But to accept without question, and without critical precautions, the frontier contribution to American literature seems to me a decided danger in the opposite direction. Mr. Parkes is compelled to make his points so briefly one feels the danger of misunderstanding him when he speaks of literature. But when he seems to give group approval to a whole band of realistic twentieth century

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American novelists who are indebted in language and feeling to this colloquial frontier heritage, one wonders if his admiration for eighteenth and nineteenth century American agrarian society hasn't persuaded him to make some dangerous critical concessions. It seems to me that the most important question to-day for the literary historian of America is to discover a valid basis for understanding and exchange between the American and English literary traditions. Anything even approaching a bloodless Genteel Traditionalism would be fatal; but on the other hand it is doubtful if the main line of development will stem from the frontier heritage. The main line should begin with Hawthorne, and continue with Melville and Henry James. But it is precisely on Hawthorne that Mr. Parkes is weakest. 'Since he had no strong need within himself to dominate his environment', Mr. Parkes writes, 'he could portray fairly and dispassionately the consequence of such a need in others. But since he lacked the compulsive drive of the writer who is himself the victim of conflict and must find a way of salvation, his work lacked force and energy. Carefully and delicately constructed, it was devoid of color and drama and almost passionless'. Since I have discussed several of the questions raised in this passage elsewhere in this issue of *Scrutiny*, I shall only say here that these remarks on Hawthorne suggest to me a strong prejudice in favour of a particular kind of aggressive Americanism developed in an agrarian society, and carrying on in somewhat less amiable forms to-day. The traditional stemming from that society undoubtedly carries at its heart, as it is the purpose of Mr. Parkes's book to prove, those essential American values that need to be constantly reaffirmed. But Hawthorne is as closely in touch with its virtues as any other American writer. And the tradition in which he figures so largely has the advantage of relating, in ways that the frontier tradition does not, to a larger English tradition.

Nevertheless, Mr. Parkes's book is almost indispensable for anyone interested in the subject, and it is calculated to give that kind of perspective which an English student interested in American affairs requires if his judgments are to be applicable to things as they are.

MARIUS BEWLEY.

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WYATT AND THE SCHOLARS

COLLECTED POEMS OF SIR THOMAS WYATT, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Muir (*Routledge and Kegan Paul,* 10/6).

THE POETRY OF SIR THOMAS WYATT, a selection and a study, by E. M. W. Tillyard (*Chatto and Windus,* 1949).

SILVER POETS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, edited with an introduction by Gerald Bullett (*J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.,* 1947).

The appearance of the collected poems in 'The Muses' Library' series gives the general reader his first opportunity for twenty years or more to possess a complete Wyatt and puts an end to an intolerable history, beginning with the failure of Wyatt himself or his immediate circle to issue an authoritative text and not terminated by the publication in 1913 of the standard modern edition by A. K. Foxwell. Wyatt's reputation was based for some two hundred and fifty years on the selection made for *Songs and Sonnets,* printed by Richard Tottel in 1557. The public had to wait until 1816, when the first of the line of Wyatt scholars, G. F. Nott, printed the poems from the available manuscripts, to discover that Tottel's editor or editors had departed systematically from the manuscript readings, actuated, it would seem, by a conviction that Wyatt's poems could be rendered more poetical by regularizing the metre. This conviction has been shared in varying degrees of strength by almost all subsequent scholars—and Wyatt has been pre-eminently the scholar's plaything—down to recent times. Nott himself occasionally silently rewrote passages to bring them into line with his sense of the poetical.

How powerful the Tottel tradition has proved may be estimated by consulting the old *Oxford Book of English Verse.* 'Care has been taken with the texts', wrote A. Quiller Couch in 1900, 'But I have sometimes thought it consistent with the aim of the book to prefer the more beautiful to the better attested reading'. Of the five poems by Wyatt published in this anthology, one ('They flee from me . . .') is reprinted from Tottel in the tumty tum version, of which

> And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss

for

> Therewithal sweetly did me kiss

is a representative line, one contains a stanza rewritten by Nott, who supplies a missing line (though *he* drew attention to the gap):

> Thought for to take
> Tis not my mind;
> But to forsake
> One so unkind;

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(The MS. reads

Though for to take
It is not my mind
But to forsake
. . . . . .),

two others contain lines touched up by Nott and further mishandled by the Oxford Book editor, *e.g.*,

For when this song is said and past

for

For when this song is sung and past,

leaving only one poem in the best text available.

Dr. Tillyard's book is a reprint of a work first published in a limited edition in 1929. Since then he has acquired a considerable academic reputation which might induce in the general reader a sense of security concerning the soundness of the text he prints, especially as in this reprint he states that only one mistake in the text has had to be rectified.[1] Even if he considered the possibility of errors having crept in, it would not be easy for the layman to come to a final decision on the reliability of Dr. Tillyard's text. On the one hand we have the formal assurance, 'The text is taken from the manuscripts direct, or from Flügel's transcripts in *Anglia*, vols. 18 and 19, or from Arber's reprint of Tottel's Miscellany' together with, as the reader of Mr. Muir's edition will note, three or four excellent emendations based on consultation of the manuscripts. On the other hand, with Mr. Muir's edition in front of us, we can detect a large number of instances where the text has apparently been silently altered without any other authority than Dr. Tillyard's own judgment, and others where he appears to have followed either Nott or Foxwell in misreading the manuscripts. The most that the layman can assert is that if Mr. Muir's text is reliable, then Dr. Tillyard's is *not*.[2]

Mr. Muir's edition also enables us to form a more reliable judgment on the standard work by A. K. Foxwell. If Dr. Tillyard erred in taking for granted that her text was sound, he erred in good company, for Professor H. E. Rollins in the previous year had

[1]This, for owners of the 1929 edition, is 'Drowned *is* reason' in 'My galley charged . . .", to which a reviewer had called attention. He has also silently corrected his earlier version of line 16 of 'And wilt thou leave . . .'. In fairness to Dr. Tillyard it must be conceded that he was faced with an awkward task in revising his notes and comments. 'It is well', he writes, 'to let earlier work stand or to recast it completely'. He might, however, have corrected the quotation from Horace on page 162, which as it stands is likely to disturb the reader with less Latin than Dr. Tillyard. And the non-scholarly reader would have been grateful had Chambers's correction of the transcript from the *Calendar of State Papers* quoted on page 5 been introduced into the reprinted Introduction.

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accepted her manuscript readings and thus left a blemish on what would have been a definitive edition of the Miscellany. Mr. Muir lists more than a hundred instances of departures from the manuscripts. Most of them consist in mistaking a single letter in a word, but very often the sense of the passage is completely altered, an apparent obscurity vanishes or a more acceptable reading is obtained. The reader will be particularly grateful for the corrections in the poems which were hitherto only to be found in Miss Foxwell's edition. Consider, for instance, 'Payne of all payne . . .' printed for the first time in Miss Foxwell's edition (p. 316), where we find in line 8:

Of guerdon ill, the mynde oblivyous,

and then turn up Muir (No. 141), who relieves the puzzling reader with

Of good or ill the minde oblivyous,

and in this same poem Muir reads

Recorde of Therence in his commedis poeticall

thus doing away with the baffling 'remedis' of Foxwell. Another useful improvement occurs in the sixth stanza where Miss Foxwell read

To make *so ferefull* of old antiquitye
What nedeth it?

---

[2]The general reader who has elected to use Dr. Tillyard's selection may care to note the results of the following rough collation of Nott, Foxwell and Muir. The references are to the poems numbered 1-60 in *The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt*. The following are instances of 'original' readings (the reading in Muir follows): 6, 7 (i.e. poem 6, line 7): that/which. 10, 13: we/ye. 16, 14: my/mine. 17, 20: the/my. 21, 7: first gan/gan first. 21, 16: thee/thy. 23, 11: thy/my. 28, 6: of all power/with all my powre. 33, 3: The/And. 34, 38: I have/have I. 36, 10: of/to. 41, 8: sheak/shake. 42, 39: would/could. 46, 11: all/not in the other editions. 46, 38: of/on. 54, 5: can I/I can. 57, 6: hath/have. 59, 24: or/nor. 59, 52: looks/lokd. 59, 92: thy/thine. 60, 20: ever set my trust/set my confydence (Wyatt's own emendation). The following are instances of readings apparently taken from Foxwell, where Nott has the reading given by Muir: 6, 3: paine/pains. 11, 4: that/and. 19, 3: moan/morne. 22, 7: day/dayes. 27, 12: this/thus. 34, 2: and/or. 36, 8: into/unto. 36, 16: restrain/constrain. 46, 29: worse/worst. In the following instances Dr. Tillyard appears to have followed Nott: 14, 6: sight/sighed. 18, 14: omits shall. 24, 18: That most/Most that. 55, 40: will be/will I be. 59, 43: town/towny. In 50, 20 Dr. Tillyard in printing 'fret' appears to have overlooked the fact that Nott himself states that it was a typographical error for 'threat' (*cf.* Nott's Preface, page xv.).

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For the words in italics, Mr. Muir reads 'rehersall'. But a complete listing of all the instances would be necessary to bring home to the reader what a great improvement Mr. Muir has made in the Wyatt text. In addition he has suggested a number of plausible emendations of corrupt passages. This text is likely to stand for some time.[3]

It is unfortunate that Mr. Bullett's *Everyman* edition came out too soon to benefit from Mr. Muir's work. Though a cursory examination of his text suggests that he was not so greatly concerned to give the best attested reading as his claim that, 'our text represents its editor's choice between Nott and Foxwell, with a strong leaning towards the latter' might lead the unwary reader to suppose. It is not fair to complain that he, like every one else without leisure to consult the manuscripts, was at the mercy of inaccurate scholars. But when he deliberately abandons the scholars and gives inferior readings without informing the reader that he is departing from his authorities, we do have a right to protest.

On lines 9-12 of 'Marvel no more . . .' *all* the texts (*i.e.*, the two principal manuscripts as read by Nott and Foxwell and Tottel's Miscellany agreed:

> How may a man in smart
> Find matter to rejoice?
> How may a mourning heart
> Set forth a pleasant voice?

The sense is admirably clear. Mr. Bullett, however, prints

> How many a man in smart
> Find matter to rejoice?
> How many a mourning heart
> Set forth a pleasant voice?

And if asked on what authority he changed 'may' to 'many', Mr. Bullett could no doubt refer to the editions of the Miscellany from 1559!

Or again: Mr. Bullett in his introduction points out the destruction of metrical subtlety wrought by the editor of the Miscellany in his version of 'They flee from me . . .', but at line 13 he himself leaves the manuscript he had been following and for

> Therewithall swetely did me kysse,

prints

> Therewith so sweetly did me kiss

and later returns to Tottel with

> But all is turn'd now through my gentleness
> Into a bitter fashion of forsaking;

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[3]The occasional references to Miss Hughey would seem to suggest that Mr. Muir has had access to unpublished material on the Arundel MS.

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where the MS. reads

> But all is torned thorough my gentilnes
> Into a straunge fasshion of forsaking;

as both Nott and Foxwell agreed.

A pleasing feature of Mr. Muir's edition is the economy with which a mass of material usually only supplied in large-scale editions is packed into the convenient format of a pocket-size book. (Besides the textual notes, there is a life, 'appreciation', glossary and two prose letters). Valuable space, however, is wasted on a section of critical comments extracted from the meagre sources available. They are for the most part culled from editors' introductions or literary histories. In seeking to account for the nullity of so much erudite effort, one may turn to a remark made by one of the most erudite of these scholars and not the most critically inept. 'The first requirement for the critic', writes J. M. Berdan in *Early Tudor Poetry*, 'is not taste, not appreciation, however valuable and desirable they may be, it is a knowledge of literary history'. Yet when another Wyatt scholar looks back on the kind of literary history constructed round Wyatt by his predecessors, it is surely significant that the burden should run as follows[4]: ' . . . in a sane estimate of Wyatt's achievement, the exotic writing is of little account. It is true that a dozen historians of literature acclaim it as his chief merit that he introduced the sonnet into England. But a writer's merit lies in what he accomplishes, not in what baffles him. It is the quality of emotional expression in poetry, not its technical form, which fundamentally matters, although no doubt the form often helps to determine the quality. Our historians have seen things in the wrong perspective, betrayed by a type of scholarship which sheers away from the approach to personality in literature, and busies itself with the evolution of literary types and the transmission from writer to writer of individual literary motives and images. Source-hunting has long been the bane of academic study. It is intelligible enough. Judgments of fact are always easier than judgments of value'. A more adequate statement of the case against such scholars would lie in a demonstration that judgments of fact are inseparable from the judgments of value which determine what the immediate facts are and what associated kinds of fact are really relevant. From such a point of view it is a grave indictment that many of the scholars who have devoted years to the study of the Tudor poets, when they do not actually dislike Wyatt, fail to establish a taste for him. There is a comic disagreement among the authorities over individual poems, the same poem figuring now as an example of the best and now of the worst in Wyatt.

Compared with their predecessors, or most of them, Wyatt's three latest editors do represent a certain improvement. They all at least like rather more of Wyatt than was printed in Palgrave or the

[4]E. K. Chambers in *Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies* (1933).

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Oxford Book. They all prefer Wyatt to Surrey, thus breaking the century-old scholarly *consensus*. Yet on closer inspection the improvement does not appear to be radical. Dr. Tillyard alone comes forward with a separate study and thus makes a prior claim on our attention. Here the early date (1929) of the 'study' should be recalled and a distinction drawn between the critical chapters and the notes to the poems. None of the well-known editions attempts close analysis of the many passages where the sense is obscure. Dr. Tillyard has done pioneer work on one or two of them. If the notes had not been reprinted *verbatim* there would be no call at this date to refer to one of the reviews (an extract from which is given in Mr. Muir's unintended *sottisier*) of the original book '. . . he sometimes gets a voice of thin-lipped frigidity which makes him seem like a schoolmaster who has "set" Wyatt as a "subject" and is now correcting the papers; and one or two of his comments seem to be addressed to a class of elementary school children'. (Dr. Tillyard, the reader will recall, was then comparatively unknown). The charge of frigidity seems to me unjust. His characteristic notes read like model answers for a correspondence course in 'literary appreciation' as required by school and university examiners. Here is an example taken at random; the comment refers to 'From these high hills . . .', 'This epigram is both beautiful and pointed. The second line has quite a surprising charm and the rest shows a pleasing harmony of sound and sense. There is an aptitude in the implied comparison between the gentle trickling head-waters of the stream and the unnoticed infiltration of love into the mind'.

The principles underlying Dr. Tillyard's study are just as external as those of his predecessors. Take, for instance, his 'Platonic' view of the verse forms, as illustrated in the legislative 'musts' in the following extracts. 'The rondeau, a difficult form, requires an exquisite and artful ease; the English sonnet must be monumental. . . . A sonnet to please must be either exquisite or grand. . . .[Wyatt was neither, therefore] The sonnet was not his proper medium . . . the epigram must be both polished and pointed . . . [Wyatt's epigrams] lack the necessary elegance. Wyatt makes a poor show when he competes with Austin Dobson'. This final remark shows how far such *a priori* principles can mislead the critic. If direct inspection of the poems did not inform Dr. Tillyard that Wyatt was not competing with Austin Dobson, a reference to the 'sources' might have reminded him of the Italian models indicating the *genre* on which Wyatt (I think) was making an original variation.

Dr. Tillyard approaches the metres in a similar spirit. Commenting on Wyatt's poems in *terza rima*, he writes, 'The essence of the metre is that the tercets should be kept mainly intact'. But on questions of rhythm and metre Dr. Tillyard has been superseded. In reprinting his 1929 book without change in 1949 he wrote, 'Not enough new matter on Wyatt has appeared in the interval to demand recasting'. The reader of pages 18-19 of the reprint might scribble in the margin, 'cancel, see Harding, *Scrutiny*, Vol. xiv No. 2',

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which is what in effect Mr. Muir has done in his introduction. Mr. Muir has also benefited from another outsider to break away from two bad strains of the scholarly tradition. 'Critics like Mr. Berdan, who have argued that Wyatt was often imitating where he was not directly translating, have cast doubt on the sincerity of his lyrics. They imply that a man cannot express his own feelings in a borrowed convention and that lyric poetry is a kind of confessional. In fact, as Mr. Eliot has pointed out, one of the qualities of a genuine poet is that in reading him we are reminded of remote predecessors' and 'one is prepared for art when one has ceased to be interested in one's own emotions and experiences except as material; and when one has reached this point of indifference one will pick and choose according to very different principles from the principles of those people who are still excited by their own feelings and passionately excited over their own passions'. To pretend that Wyatt was cold and impersonal or to maintain, as some critics have done, that his poems were mere exercises in versifying, would be as foolish as to suppose that all his poems were directly autobiographical. He had a profoundly passionate nature, but his poems are essentially dramatic. He used emotions he had experienced: but he made them serve the purposes of his art'.

To expand the hints given by Eliot and Harding would seem the most likely starting point for a radical revaluation of Wyatt, if one can speak of revaluation where no proper valuation has ever been made. Indeed, none of the first questions has been satisfactorily answered. A few mechanical gestures will not give meaning to the formula, 'Wyatt lived at the end of one tradition and he was the main originator of another'. To take the latter half of the proposition first, the evidence we have seems to point strongly to the suggestion that Wyatt made no effective difference to the practice of any one outside his immediate circle. 'The sonnet', Mr. Muir says, 'was virtually reintroduced into England two generations after Wyatt's first translations from Petrarch'. For a serious account of Wyatt's relation to the mediaeval tradition, we shall, perhaps, have to wait until the quickening study of that vast field has extended to the period after Chaucer's death.

What might be attempted now is a demonstration of the strength of the native tradition as measured by Wyatt's *resistance* to foreign influence. It has too long been assumed that the Italy of his times exhibited something incomparably finer in the way of civilization than anything a mere Englishman could hope to find at home. Wyatt's numerous 'translations' have been taken as evidence of an admitted inferiority. Yet, while the poems suggest that Wyatt was using Petrarch, say, for more than one purpose, it is clear that in some cases he was deliberately criticizing Petrarch and asserting a different, and not merely individual standard. I am not thinking so much of Wyatt's occasional rejection of the love conventions, as of the temper exhibited, for instance, in 'Who so list to hunt . . .' The poem by Petrarch and the variation by Romanello suppose a static, 'heraldic' relation between the hind and the lady,

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whereas Wyatt is clearly playing with a human/animal theme. He is free to express a contemporary sensibility within a chosen convention of his own. Wyatt's poem stands on its own feet and the reference to 'sources' merely serves to emphasize its independence.

As for Wyatt's supposed debt to French poets, it is sufficiently striking that there is so little of it for even the scholars to point to. The following, for instance, is thought to illustrate Wyatt's inferiority:

Madame, withouten many wordes
Ons I ame sure ye will or no;
And if ye will, then leve your bordes,
And use your wit and shew it so.

And with a beck ye shall me call,
And if of oon that burneth alwaye
Ye have any pitie at all,
Aunswer him faire with yea or nay.

Yf it be yea I shalbe fayne;
If it be nay, frendes as before;
Ye shall an othre man obtain,
And I myn owne and yours no more.

The French 'original' runs:

S'amour vous a donné mon cœur en gage
De quoy vous sert user tant de langage?
Ou vous voulez ou vous ne voulez point;

Quand vous voudriez deux mille ans deviser,
Si faudroit-il à la fin s'aviser
Qu'on s'en ennuye et venir à un point;

Si vous voulez, ne faites que branler;
Car j'entendray le moindre signe en l'air,
Et vous seray ami non decevant.

S'il ne vous plaist? amis comme devant.
Un autre aurez et moy ne pouvant estre
Servant de vous, de moi je seray maistre.

Wyatt's poem is as English as the French is French, and none the worse for that. It would be rash on this evidence alone to assert the characteristic superiority of the English poem, but only a scholar who supposes a douzaine necessarily superior to quatrains could argue inferiority.

A similar argument illustrating the native strength of the English tradition might be drawn from an inspection of Wyatt's translation of Plutarch's treatise. It is striking (and characteristic) that in this translation from a Latin version Wyatt should show, as his editor points out,[5] 'an evident interest in native English words and an avoidance of Latinized vocabulary'. (Mr. Muir might profitably have used the sixteen pages of his edition which are occupied

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with transcripts from the scholars to reproduce Wyatt's *Oration* or selections from his despatches.) Reference to the prose does reinforce the impression that Wyatt's poetry is the flowering of a delicate culture with roots beneath and an aspiration 'upwards' towards an 'ideal community'. C. R. Baskervill describes Wyatt as 'the "full-fraught" man of the Renaissance, the type of scholar, statesman and courtier idealized in the age and nobly described by Castiglione'. He is rather a paragon of the distinctive English tradition, as recently sketched in these pages by the late Wilhelm Schenk.[6] So that, whether or no an examination of the relations between the 'popular' and the 'refined' elements in Wyatt's poetry would leave one with 'delicate' rather than 'robust' as the more appropriate epithet for the civilization underlying Wyatt's poems, compared with that of later generations, there is considerable point in the claim[7] that 'his social background was not, in certain essentials, dissimilar to that in which men like Sir Henry Wotton, Lord Herbert, and Donne grew to maturity'.

Finally, we are left with the question whether the enquiries into the culture and social background involve a radical reinterpretation of Wyatt's achievement. The three editors under review agree broadly in concluding that Wyatt's supreme achievement lies in the poems in lyric measures, confined to the expression of a single 'thought', with the speech accent falling neatly where the metre leads. The prevailing taste for Wyatt is still modified Palgrave. (Neither of the two selections includes 'Ye old mule . . .'[8]) It still remains to be decided whether movements such as

> But though ye have had my hartes cure,
> *Trow ye I dote withoute ending?*
> What no, perdy!

do not represent a triumph of art impossible in simpler poems.

H. A. MASON.

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[5]Plutarch's *Quyete of Mynde* (1527), reproduced in facsimile, with an introduction by C. R. Baskervill, Cambridge (Mass.) 1931.
[6]*The 'Cortegiano' and the Civilization of the Renaissance*, vol. xvi No. 2.
[7]Made by E. D. Mackerness in *English*, vol. vii No. 39.
[8]A poem singled out for praise by Mr. Muir.

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THE PALISADES OF FEAR, by Ronald Bottrall (*PL*, 6/-).

Mr. Bottrall wrote *The Loosening* twenty years ago as one well acquainted with the themes of the best contemporary criticism and with the general problem frequently raised in conjunction with it, of culture in a disintegrated industrial society. He gave his poems the quality of intelligent conversation. When his poetic purposes required, he drew on his whole experience as an educated person and referred readily both to contemporary literature and to history. Though not afraid of intellectual activity, at times Mr. Bottrall could associate himself in a Wordsworthian sympathy with the life of natural objects, where vigour lies not in thoughts or hopes but in growth and sufficiency:

> We own the natural ecstacy of the tree
> Shooting sap into its branches, a finger tip awareness
> Of ourselves as a divided whole

Passages like this suggested some depth of poetic experience, and might have developed well in conjunction with the power of lively reaction and description in Mr. Bottrall's dealing with the contemporary scene

> Our truth will stand
> And prevail, transported canned
> By a Canadian peer, his emblems an economic axe
> To clear the road and withes to twist
> The limbs of empire fast,
> His bodyguard the lictor journalist

(though it may be that the liveliness here is rather that of a piece of heavy clockwork than of muscle).

When Mr. Bottrall's merits were recognised by F. R. Leavis in *New Bearings in English Poetry*, the high expectations there raised seem to me to have been insufficiently tempered with a recognition of deficiencies that were already evident. Mr. Bottrall wrote too easily, even at that time, of

> Men lurching forward
> From out the ferro-concrete blocks
> And peering into vacancy.

He was concerned for society, but did not offer in his poems any hint of the proper relation between persons, necessary even between the poet and his material when his material is persons, of human regard or esteem. His people were often lost for a scenic *tour de force*, and the attitudes of his poems seemed too rarely to grow from particular feelings, and frequently to prevent them.

One could illustrate all the characteristics of *The Loosening* apart from the conversational quality, with quotations from Mr. Bottrall's recent volume, *The Palisades of Fear*, but this would not adequately describe the latter book. When the description is com-

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pleted, these characteristics are no incongruous part of the whole, and the additions perhaps provide a commentary on the poet's early, as well as his later achievement.

The plight of contemporary civilization, with which much of *The Loosening* was concerned, was a plight from which, in its most humiliating form, the reader dissociated himself merely by caring. The reader of *The Palisades of Fear* may find himself touched more closely, for the poet no longer appears to think of himself, his reader and contemporary civilisation as independent entities, and undertakes self-reproach on his reader's as well as his own behalf.

And which of us cannot show a hoof that is cloven? But were he to write in this way acceptably, he would have to rely on just that community of feeling with his reader from the lack of which springs his distress. If the 'cloven hoof' is an acceptable symbol to numerous readers, none of whom would agree on what they meant by it in any specific situation, Mr. Bottrall is only making the same sort of broad gesture as appears in his social criticism:

> The hum of generators and saws
> Stirs the brash fluttering of heart
> To heart, and enlightened laws
> Enforce the cleft between love and deed

where the reader may accept the sentiment while remaining unable to recall any precise personal situation to which it would be applicable. These are not agreements from which even discussion could begin. Like Mr. Bottrall's psychology—

> Oh, the virgin forest dark within our heart
> Twined with lianas and rotting orchids!
> Oh, the derelict hulks, the Sargasso Sea!

—they are conventional generalizations. There is little more definite in *The Palisades of Fear* to justify the air of compulsive argument and the strong feeling that pervades the book.

Mr. Bottrall invokes a world mythology as a background for his and our contemporary problems. We have in *Hiroshima*

> Future is in the wind again
> News, news
> Whispered to glebe by rain
> (Or) trumpeted by heaven's cherubin
> Cracking a peal across the welkin
> (Or) sighed to the navel of the earth
> At Delphi . . .

And so on through various Christian references to Djinns riding the blast and the storm in Lear. It is not difficult to assemble this heavy machinery, but it seems unnecessary when it only produces

> This shattered minute is dealt and spread
> Like stardust over the years
> Of the unborn and the dead.

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The illusion of an extensive view, of an awareness of general implications stretching backwards and forwards through time, which *Hiroshima* tries to arouse must depend on indifference to any particular detail in Mr. Bottrall's references to comparative civilization and comparative religion. Any concern for what each detail may be in itself can only hamper the reader. The unvarying tone of the verse from reference to reference gives all a deadening sameness. The strength of the poet's emotion is everywhere in evidence, but never its quality or its exact causes. In this whole poem *Hiroshima,* just as in patches of other poems, now more reminiscent of Beddoes than Pound,

> Green
> Are the gangrenous bodies of our hopes
> Composted in their fertile hecatombs

the reader has the simple choice between thrill and boredom.

Mr. Bottrall would perhaps have us believe that this is the only way of dealing with a situation where the poet is aware of so many possible attitudes and ways of belief that he can commit himself to none. Yeats, to whom Mr. Bottrall owes some of his many debts both in tricks of phrase and in manner, wrote very differently from much the same position. It was not, it seems to me, because Yeats was born into a national tradition. Though he found subjects in Irish personalities and Irish legend he was not, apart from his will to be Irish, in an Irish tradition any more than through his interest in Plato or Plotinus he was in a Greek one. The strength behind Yeats is a devotion to particularities that amounts almost to Pantheism. Yeats regarded whatever was in his mind in the spirit of Idealist philosophy, and its chief sanction was his conviction that it was honestly there. His poems were an arrangement of his own experiences, rather than an attempt to add up representative experiences to provide attitudes for the age. And so there is in Yeats so much more of what the poet wanted to say and so much less of what he thought he ought to be saying than there is in Mr. Bottrall. One is always interested in what Yeats says. And, what is more important, his poems have a fulness of human character to which Mr. Bottrall's work has yet even to aspire.

PETER LIENHARDT.

ENGLISH ART, 1307-1461, by Joan Evans (*O.U.P.* 30/-).

A panel of experts would be needed for an adequate review of the first volume of the Oxford history of art since it covers subjects from illumination and sculpture to social and political history. From the author's previous works, from the general tone of confidence, and from the bibliography it must be assumed that Miss Evans has written accurately and carefully; the labour involved must have been very great. It is here only intended to notice the sections on architecture, which is, the editor says in the Preface, 'the framework in which the other arts are set'.

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Miss Evans begins her account of Decorated with the Elinor Crosses, as Lethaby suggested should be done, carrying straight through to the Crouchback-Aymer de Valence group of monuments, omitting the Winchester stalls. She defines the 'style' before dealing with the buildings and finds that Decorated is 'remarkable as the first mediæval style that was not based on any structural innovations'. Taking 'structural' in the narrow sense implied there are only two mediæval styles, round and pointed arch, and the architects of 1320 were no more unoriginal than those of 1220. What meaning the sentence has depends on an old and often criticized misuse of the word style. Early English is made to cover far too much, to cover more than one style. If Sharpe's neater tabulation had been followed then Geometrical would have been the first non-structural style in Miss Evans's sense, but if structural is given its usual liberal meaning then the enlarging of windows and the more complicated vaults would suggest the definition has a very small deposit of meaning.

Decorated architecture is briefly catalogued; the Wells chapter house, Exeter, the St. Albans and Ely Lady chapels, York nave and chapter house, Lichfield presbytery and many others are there. But the account is untidy, the chronology jumps forward and backward; St. Stephen's, Westminster, has jumped right out of the building section into a chapter on Patronage. It fails to be consecutive, readable history. The fault, of course, is not entirely the author's; Gothic development is extremely complex. The buildings can be arranged stylistically, in which case the chronology has to go and good buildings have to be relegated to footnotes as being 'archaic' and poor ones lauded as having significance as precursors, or chronologically, in which case coherent account of development and regional differentation are impossible. The excuse for the confusion that both chronology and development had been sacrificed to bring home, say by comparison of groups of buildings with a similar purpose, Lady chapels or chapter houses, the merits or demerits of the buildings of the time, for evaluative purposes in fact, is not open to the author. She avoids expressing opinion, and substitutes for judgment charged description. Of Wells chapter house she writes; 'the incredible palm-tree vault of the central pier strikes an entirely new note; architectural form here passes into something far closer to natural growth'. At Exeter the nave vault 'springs out into like a palm in the manner of Wells, in a lovely multiplicity that is a denial of pure structure'. Perhaps it would be safer not to enquire into the meaning of 'pure structure' and 'natural growth' but it is obvious that a brief comparison of the Wells chapter house and that of Salisbury, or even York, would have saved the trouble of describing in non-technical terms and avoided the curious and irrelevant analogies. Done properly such comparisons could be a great deal more than merely convenient. There is much too much of the hit-or-miss description; 'the towers at Wells, which date from 1320, have a new lightness, but seem to be politely conscious of the nave'. There is no indication of which towers have,

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by implication, the old heaviness, nor any attempt to define the civility between towers and nave. Lincoln's ungainly brute of a central tower is just mentioned and dated (being earlier than Wells it appears after in the text) and its architect given (see Harvey), yet it is honoured with a plate and Wells is not. The Ely Lady chapel is described, the octagon 'is remarkable for its apparent inevitability'—a horribly familiar phrase for anything strikingly odd, and the choir and aisle works are found disappointing, not for any humdrum particular reason but because 'the Decorated style had by now achieved a scale and proportion of its own and could not satisfactorily be applied to an earlier structure'. (So it seems after all that Decorated was 'structural'). At Lichfield Bishop Langton 'brought something of the elegance of the new style to the presbytery and Lady chapel'. He brought something of the old inelegance then. In any case it 'clearly shows the influence of Exeter' (whose nave arcade is ponderous compared with earlier ones, certainly less refined) and 'gains by the omission of the triforium arcade'. It might be recalled that the Lady chapel is among Mr. Harvey's avant-garde buildings, Exeter is not. York chapter house and nave are archaic, but the west front is highly commended. The nave bay elevation with its large clerestory windows and triforium a continuation of the clerestory mullions is not discussed.

This account of Decorated is original in nothing. It can be found conveniently in Prior's *The Cathedral Builders in England* (1905). Prior covers the ground in some ten pages, and yet is more particular than Miss Evans. Where she condemns the Ely choir by generalization he calls it 'flower-bespattered decorator's triviality', and his candour is preferable. Apart from Prior there is Clutton-Brock's brilliant little guide book to York to show how to do something better than descriptive commenting (and it is in the bibliography too). Typical of Brock's method is his analysis of the nave. 'Everywhere there is a lack of emphasis, not only in structure, but also in detail. The windows are not recessed, the capitals are small, the mouldings are delicate rather than forcible. The main piers are thin, their shafts are rather monotonously and tamely divided, the mouldings of the arches are narrow and shallow, the mullions of the clerestory and shafts on each side of them are unusually slender; and this is peculiarly unfortunate in a nave, the width of which is greater both actually and proportionately than that of any other English Gothic cathedral.' Miss Evans finds in the York nave 'a slightly archaic quality' which is nonsense. Its archaic character is only a matter of knowing its date; it could not have such a 'quality' unless there were obvious archaising.

If the first section is pedestrian, the second, dealing with Perpendicular, is thoroughly bad, and, considering the intention of the whole series, almost irresponsible. Mr. Harvey has recently completed the justification of Perpendicular and over the last five years has had a not very polite controversy with Mr. Hastings, who has questioned his views on the origins of the style. Mr. Harvey traces the growth of Perpendicular from the Old St. Paul's chapter

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house and cloisters, as depicted by Hollar, Lichfield presbytery, Wells retrochoir, Ely octagon and Gloucester to its apotheosis in the work of Yevele at Canterbury and Winchester. The features he notices are the shafts running clear from the ground to vault, the mullioned or disappearing triforium, the tracery, and the mouldings. Between the St. Paul's chapter house and Gloucester choir he shows striking similarities, though he finds 'the new choir of Gloucester, full of possibilities, had nevertheless failed to realize them and appears wiry and empty when compared with the best works of the outgoing style'. (The choir is embarrasingly fine for the reputation of Yevele, the spirit of whose work 'is a clear fountain of truth'.) Because William Ramsey was 'invited to design' the chapter house Mr. Harvey asserts that he must therefore have designed the Gloucester choir, and in this way denies that Perpendicular was, as has always been held, the invention of the west country masons. Mr. Hastings' case is essentially the same as Mr. Harvey's. He postulates a Court School, examines its indebtedness to earlier French architecture, and claims that St. Stephen's, Westminster, its chief monument, is the originating force of Perpendicular. St. Stephen's exists, of course, only in Mackenzie's beautiful (and very imaginative) drawings. The point at issue between the two experts is the dating of the Chapel. Mr. Harvey claims that the upper chapel was built between 1331 and 1335 and Mr. Hastings that it was built before the St. Paul's chapter house (1332) and that the latter 'derives all its identifiable(!) features from St. Stephen's'. He 'infers' that the St. Paul's cloisters derived from the Alura of St. Stephen's, whose appearance is unknown to us. To this Mr. Harvey replies effectively that 'the really outstanding St. Paul's features, those which stamp it as "Perpendicular" and link it most closely to Gloucester, are precisely those which do not occur in the recorded work at St. Stephen's: the window-tracery, the four-centred arches, the casement and bracket mouldings, the bases of the chapter house and capitals of the cloisters, the rows of quatrefoils set upright within square frames'. The important point to emerge, however, is one of agreement—that the Gloucester choir is London work. Even with *habeas corpus* in mind this point would seem irrefutable.

Miss Evans had three courses open to her in this controversy; she could give judgment, state the disagreements, or ignore it. She turns to the remarkable Bristol choir, as Prior did, to open the story of Perpendicular. The vertical emphasis of the piers, the aisles rising to the height of the nave, the transomes across them, are 'disconcerting in their logic' and 'seem nearer to engineering than architecture'. (Prior more interestingly suggests that an organizational division between sculptors and masons accounted for some of the originality). It seems that the basis of the innovations is 'the denial of the arch-line' as the conditioning motive, but this is neither explained or amplified. The omission of the soffit capital in the arcade, as striking a feature as any, is not mentioned—Street did not approve of the omission and put it back into the nave, and judging from the plate Miss Evans agrees with him. For the most

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surprising building of the age, Gloucester choir, there is neither praise nor blame; the arch-line is denied again and the connection between the wall panelling and tracery noted. The south aisle of Gloucester, in full Decorated, which shows no connection with the choir, built shortly after, is ignored, and yet this fact is Mr. Harvey's nearest approach to proof that the choir was London work. Miss Evans calls the West the 'cradle' of Perpendicular.

Not much else is said about the new style buildings. At St. Paul's chapter house 'the likeness to Perpendicular is of quality rather than style' which is claptrap. The only interesting thing about the catalogue that follows is the author's sense of proportion. Edington church gets three-quarters of a page, Winchester and Canterbury naves a quarter each, York choir and Beverly west front a mention, and Chipping Camden church (which probably should not be in the book at all) half a page. The effect of the Black Death is discussed after the building list is well into the fifteenth century, and then the list is quickly completed. This last section contains a very odd date for the rebuilding of Winchester nave, only a date for the Norwich nave vault which deserves better, and two critical remarks, that the parts of Winchester nave have a 'magnificent if superficial unity' and that the Westminster west front 'seems to have felt the breath of the new style', one of which appears meaningless and the other fantastic. The smaller churches are given a chapter to themselves and the attention is historical. One of the effects of this division is that it is impossible to guess the quantity of work being done at any one time. Mr. Harvey's *Henry Yevele* and *Gothic England*, however much gibberish they contain, are infinitely more useful than the account here; Mr. Harvey may have very odd views and may be hysterical, but he has got taste.

When dealing with domestic and college architecture Miss Evans is satisfactory; the remains are not such as to arouse much interest or to allow detailed criticism. To the credit side of the book are the author's injunctions to recall how much of the ecclesiastical building has disappeared unrecorded—if Mr. Hastings had kept this in mind he might not have made the deductions he did from the fact that nothing of the Winchester nave 'derives from Gloucester except the transomes'. There are probably few errors of fact in the book. It is thoroughly conscientious. The confusion between the York and Canterbury screens has been pointed out in the *T.L.S.*, where various other minor errors were noted in the review article.

Criticism of Gothic architecture is extremely difficult, there are so many factors about which the critic can know little—he cannot have studied the liturgical requirements and their effect on development, the nature of the various stones, the effect of the organization of the craftsmen on development, the influence of the clients (of the Orders, the Court, or even the whims of a prelate) and earn a living. It is hard also to be exacting; 'There is something right in old monuments that have been wrong for centuries'. From the point of view of convenience the best way to write the history of Gothic is, as Lethaby did, to concentrate on one building, but only Westminster,

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and to a lesser degree, Lincoln, offer sufficient material. But these difficulties, if insuperable, are not the serious ones; the grounds of criticism must continually be in question. Before 1800 Gothic criticism did not exist. What made it possible, of course, was the Revival. The Victorians erected a critical structure and enabled themselves to choose the 'best models'. Their tone was thoroughly practical (the piece quoted from Clutton-Brock is a good example), the tone of the architect pointing out that the same mistake would not be made twice and that the same felicity would be repeated. Scott told the R.A. students that Westminster was 'a perfect mine of information'. This practical link with Gothic, however factitious or wrong-headed, is the only thing that makes precise criticism, whatever it is worth, possible—as a witness to this there is no corresponding criticism of the unrevived Romanesque (architecture comes alive, arouses the inclination to discuss and discriminate, somewhere at the time of the Glastonbury chapel and the Castle Acre façade). Provided this practical tone of criticism is used with circumspection, with some knowledge of its origin and worth, it appears quite feasible and reasonable. It is always necessary to keep the references within a limited time and area if precision is to be maintained—it is, for example, useless to assert that the French square abacus is better than the English round.

When the presuppositions of the practical Victorian critics were brought into disrepute, by Adams most brilliantly, for *Mont Saint Michel* is amongst other things a deliberate and successful attack on Viollet-le-Duc, the modern critics tried to find alternative manners of criticism. Gill's stereothomism was no substitute; Gill's judgments were thoughtless and cocky, however right or wrong his general views were. Worringer's 'philosophic' broadsides were ludicrous and in any case, to be effective, involved talking away, very far away, from the subject. The practical method, whatever the presuppositions that made it possible are worth, still remains the only possible critical method. Because of this the suspicion that the whole critical superstructure is just nonsense, or at best an arbitrary game with no enforceable rules, must always remain. A critic of French classic architecture knows he is safe provided he does not fall out too often with Blondel; the Gothic critic is helpless.

Of the critics writing to-day only Mr. Harvey has definite taste, which he is capable of substantiating by detailed and disputable comment, though his monarchical, pure Aryan, and generally over-ambitious and excited tendencies put off most of his well-wishers. On the other hand Miss Evans' remarks on any building are incontrovertible, since being, apart from the expressions of delight, so negligible they offer no ground for opposition. This first volume is, in the most important chapters, not altogether useless (it can be used for reference in spite of the unintelligent index), even if badly, not merely inadequately, illustrated. It is the product of reputable if not inspired scholarship, and probably nobody ever expected anything better for the great Oxford history.

PETER FERRIDAY.

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